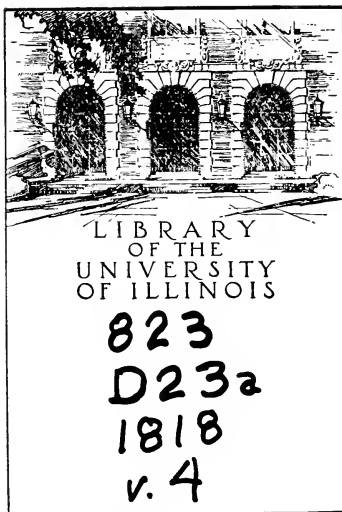


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AN

ANGEL'S FORM AND A DEVIL'S HEART.

A NOVEL.

Printed by J. Darling, Leadenhall-Street, London.

COLLEGE OF HORTICULTURE

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AN

ANGEL'S FORM

AND A

Devil's Heart.

A NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

SELINA DAVENPORT,

AUTHOR OF THE HYPOCRITE, OR MODERN JANUS, DONALD
MONTEITH, ORIGINAL OF THE MINIATURE,
LEAP YEAR, &c.

"——— Yet mine eyes
Were not in fault, for she was beautiful;
Mine ears, that heard her flattery, nor my heart
That thought her like her seeming : it had been vicious
To have mistrusted her."

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AN

Angel's Form & a Devil's Heart.

CHAPTER I.

OLD Bridget had scarcely left the room, when Frederic entered.—“What in the name of fate, Mackenzie, could induce you to detain that old gossip so long? I thought every minute an age that she staid, and wished her safe lodged in one of the dungeons of the castle, where her loquacity would soon have been silenced, for to me it appeared endless. Plague take the old woman! she has hindered me of an hour's conversation which I

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wished to have with you. Why, Edward, what can the old crone have told you, to make you look so pale and woe-begone? Some sad story about the spectre of the castle? some lamentable history of two faithful hearts crossed in love, and ending in bloodshed and murder?"

Edward smiled with all his accustomed kindness on his friend; he was about to reply, when the door was suddenly opened, and as suddenly closed by lady Elinor. Softly she approached to where the friends were standing in mute astonishment, and thus addressed Edward, in a low voice, and in evident confusion, not daring to raise her eyes from the ground.

"I hope that you will forgive the boldness of this intrusion, sir," said she, "as well as the deception which I have unwillingly been compelled to practise on you by the orders of madame Dubois, who is mistress here during the absence of the marchioness. It was her desire
that

that I should pass for lady Elinor, whom she strictly enjoined not to leave her room while you remained——”

“Then you are not the daughter of the marquis?” hastily inquired Frederic, almost breathless with impatience.

“No, sir,” she modestly replied, “I am the daughter of his steward, who has lived many years in the family of the marquis. My dislike to appear before you and this gentleman as lady Elinor will account for my confusion. To you, sir, in particular, I must apologize for receiving the packet destined solely for her ladyship; I have, however, delivered it safe into her hands, and she is, in consequence, deeply affected by your kindness, in undertaking so long a journey on her account. She has therefore commissioned me to say, that, although her governess has thought fit to deny her the pleasure of thanking you personally for your goodness, you will nevertheless carry with you her best wishes and most grateful remembrance; and as

this is the only opportunity she might have of conveying to you her sentiments, I trust that you will not think the worse of me, for executing the wishes of one of the best and kindest of human beings."

"Dear, kind girl!" exclaimed Frederic, hastily, "I thank you a thousand times in both our names. But is it not possible to gain a sight of lady Elinor, if only for five minutes? Tell her, I beseech you, that the friend who has accompanied Mr. Mackenzie, for the sole purpose of seeing her, is the son of lady Manningham, the cousin of her father. Tell her that he has long, long sighed for an opportunity of assuring her of his kindest friendship; and that unless she allows him the privilege of a relation, and grants him the happiness of half an hour's conversation, he will consider himself as the most unfortunate of men. Tell her all this, I beseech you, my dear girl, and as much more as you please, so that you do but persuade lady Elinor to allow us to see her."

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“Most warmly do I second the wishes of my friend,” said Edward, in a persuasive voice. “On your influence I shall rely. Return, I entreat of you, and tell lady Elinor that the toils of our journey will seem light as air, if blest with the sweet reward of beholding her. Tell her also, that her dear little brother strictly enjoined me to see her, that I might assure her of his affection.”

“I will do my best for you,” replied the pretended lady Elinor; “but the hour is late, the whole household have long retired to rest, and her ladyship, who I confess wishes to see the confident of her brother, will naturally feel reluctant to an interview with strangers, who might at a future time misconstrue her condescension.”

“Oh, do not harbour for an instant a thought so injurious to our honour,” exclaimed Frederic, warmly; “we are well aware of the secluded situation of lady Elinor, and bitterly regret that she has been so long withheld from the admira-

tion of the world; but let her not refuse to see one whose heart has ever beat towards her with the tenderest feelings of a relation."

"I will explain to her ladyship your wishes," said the daughter of the steward, "and in a few minutes will return with her answer."

She now softly quitted the chamber, leaving the young men in a state of painful uncertainty.

"I was right," cried Edward; "my heart did not deceive me when it rejected the idea of the steward's daughter being the child of the marchioness; and, though I had no just grounds of suspicion, yet I could not believe her to be the lady Elinor."

"Oh, how I shall glory in being too many for the wary Frenchwoman!" said Frederic. "She was afraid, forsooth, to expose her young charge to the notice of two such *dashing fellows* as we are; but she was not afraid to give us every encouragement-

couragement on her own part, which the boldest mind could suggest, or the most voluptuous heart desire. Well, whenever I marry, I will not admit a foreign domestic within my house; if my children are destined to be vicious, I'll take care that their vices shall be purely English, unmixed with the disgusting, heartless profligacy of foreign manners."

Edward could not help smiling at the warmth which his friend displayed, yet he perfectly coincided with him in his dislike of foreign tuition. Edward was about to reply, when the pretended lady Elinor re-entered, and whispering told them that her ladyship had at length yielded to her entreaties, and consented to see them for a few minutes in her presence.

"Follow me as silently as you can," said she, "for madame sleeps at the other end of the gallery: but be not alarmed," she added, smilingly, "her slumbers are

in general so sound, that nothing but a great noise will ever disturb her."

So light were their footsteps, that not a sound was to be heard along the gallery, save that of the quick breathings of the friends, who paused about the middle of the gallery, while their conductress, shading with her robe the lamp which she held, listened for an instant, then motioned them to follow her into a chamber, the door of which she gently closed after them. A young female timidly advanced to meet them, and Edward instantly recognized the daughter of the marchioness. He hurried forward—his heart was full of the same strange and uncontrollable emotions as when he first saw her mother, and his countenance glowed with the tenderness of his feelings. He pressed the delicate hand which was extended towards him, pressed it to his lips; and lady Elinor did not frown—neither did she withdraw it from him, until her eyes fell on the form of the admiring Frederick;

deric ; a blush suffused her fair skin, and she modestly turned them on the ground.

“ I hope—I trust—” said she, in a low sweet voice of virgin innocence, “ that you will not think ill of me for receiving your visit at so unseasonable an hour. Mabel urged me to grant your request; and indeed, Mr. Mackenzie, I should be the most ungrateful creature in the world, if I had not wished to see you, that I might express my warmest thanks for your kindness in performing the promise you made to my beloved brother.” Her voice faltered, and she became considerably agitated ; but recovering, she added—“ You have bestowed on me the dearest wish of my soul, Mr. Mackenzie, and my gratitude and my prayers shall follow you through life.”

“ Then I am indeed blest !” exclaimed Edward, with enthusiasm : “ dear lady Elinor ! I will treasure in my heart this proof of your considerate condescension. We shall meet again—I feel that we
B 5 shall,

and when such is the case, allow me to cherish the flattering hope that you will remember me as one who is devoted to your service." Then, turning towards Frederic, who had been hitherto silent from the joyous rush of his newly-awakened passions, he said—"This gentleman, whom with pride and delight I call my friend, has a stronger claim than myself to the remembrance of your ladyship. *He* can boast of being related to you. His feelings are the same as mine, and it was the desire of assuring your ladyship how sincerely he was interested in your welfare which induced him to accompany me in my journey."

Lady Elinor raised her eyes in sweet embarrassment, as she extended her hand towards Frederic, who carried it to his lips with a fervour of devotion which increased the colour of her cheeks—"You must think for me, Mr. Manningham," said she, in a trembling accent, "for I am unused to the language of affection, unless
when

when my dear father is here, and therefore ill able to express my feelings. But I am grateful, truly grateful for your good wishes; they will cheer the solitude of my life—they will sweeten the bitterness of my present situation, and I shall now look forward to my introduction into the world with pleasure and impatience, since I may expect to find in it two hearts free from guile, and ready to become my friends."

This was said in so artless a manner, so innocent, so sweet a tone, that both Edward and Frederic at that moment could have sworn to sacrifice every thing for her happiness.

"Lovely, and dearest lady Elinor!" exclaimed Manningham, fervently pressing her hand in his, "if *you* find it difficult to express your gratitude, how shall *I* find terms to convey to you a just idea of that love which my heart has cherished towards you, ever since Mackenzie first mentioned to me your name and melancholy seclusion

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sion from that world of which you will one day become the brightest ornament! The desire to behold you—to claim the proud privilege of being your relation, then became the fond wish of my soul; and now that I have obtained its longing desire, now that I behold you all and every thing which my ardent fancy had pictured, I feel the bitterness of fate in thus placing you so far distant from my home, and from its affectionate inmates, who like myself would study to make you happy.”

“Thank you, thank you!” said lady Elinor, with grateful energy; “if I live, and we again meet, I will endeavour to convince both you and Mr. Mackenzie that I am not unworthy of your friendship, or of the trouble you have both taken to assure me of your good opinion.”

Edward silently imprinted on her hand a kiss, while Frederic, more boisterous in his feelings, declared that he should be unable to exist, unless he was permitted

to

to see her again before he left the castle, which would not be until the day after the morrow.

“It would be a sad thing to die so young, and so beloved as you must be by your family,” said lady Elinor, smilingly; “therefore, my dear cousin, if Mabel can contrive it, I consent to have one more interview with you and your friend to-morrow night; but let it be at an earlier hour than this.”

Frederic, in raptures at the prospect of once more beholding her, promised to be ready to attend the summons of Mabel as soon as madame was asleep. He now reluctantly took leave of her ladyship, and with Edward trod softly back to the chamber of the latter, where he relieved himself by giving way to the admiration which the beauty of lady Elinor had excited, and by launching out into severe invectives against her mother, for withholding from the world so choice a treasure.

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“In lady Elinor you behold the marchioness,” said Edward, gravely. “Yet stay; let not my enthusiasm mislead me. Lady Elinor possesses all the symmetry of form, all the enchanting loveliness of feature and of grace, which so eminently distinguish her mother; but while she rivals her in the *expression* of her countenance, in the purity and innocency of look, of voice, of manner, she excels the marchioness; she is what I conceive her mother to have been at her age—and yet I must be deceived——”

“What painful remembrance has crossed your mind, Mackenzie, and clouded your brow? Banish it quickly, my dearest friend, nor damp the joyous rapture of my feelings by seeing yours less joyous than my own.”

“It was indeed a painful remembrance,” replied Edward, “but it was only momentary, my Frederic, and my heart is now at liberty to enter into all the exquisite emotions of yours. I see, I feel
that

that you are no longer free—that lady Elinor will be the star which will illumine your future path. And well does she appear to merit even thy heart, my kind, my noble Frederic! Oh, may Heaven smile upon your love! may it be returned with equal tenderness, equal constancy by her ladyship! and may no adverse power interpose its resistless authority to disunite two beings who seem formed for each other!”

“ Oh, may your last words be prophetic!” exclaimed Frederic, earnestly; “ I already love the innocent Elinor, and if I can but inspire her with a portion of my own ardent passion, no earthly power shall wrest her from me. But the rays of morning break through the shutters, and we must rise early to join that detestable Frenchwoman. Farewell, my friend! may our slumbers be propitious to the wishes of our hearts, and may a second Elinor appear, to bless the love of my chosen friend!”

A sigh

A sigh broke from the lips of Edward as the door closed and left him to himself. He felt no inclination to sleep, yet he unconsciously flung himself on the foot of the bed, while his eyes wandered over every object of the chamber, as if in search of something which was absent. Again he sighed—"A second Elinor!" said he. "Oh, where shall I find a being so pure and innocent, so divinely fair as the first Elinor? one that would love me for myself alone—one that would return the adoring tenderness of my trusting heart with equal confidence, equal animation? Once I foolishly supposed that I had found the being in whose hands I might safely place my future peace; but a cold or lukewarm passion cannot satisfy a soul like mine. Oh, Flora! it was thy dear image which I treasured in my heart—it was thy tenderness which my inexperienced mind supposed to be the only requisite to my worldly felicity; but time and circumstances have awakened me
from

from this pleasing dream of my childhood, and taught me that my hopes of bliss must rest on another and a warmer heart than thine."

Edward now rose, and opening one of the shutters, gazed for a few minutes on the water beneath, as its white foam dashed upon the stairs which led to his chamber. "How often," thought Edward, "has the devoted lover of the marchioness climbed their steep ascent, his heart throbbing with rapture as he approached nearer and nearer to the loved form of her whom he adored! What must have been his extacy as he pressed his lips to those of his beloved! what his agony on finding her faithless to her first vows of constancy and affection! Oh, wherefore this strange, this unaccountable emotion which pervades my frame at the mention of lady Anendale's name, or of the slightest thing which concerns her? how can it interest *me* to learn who was the tender lover whom she abandoned? My pity,
my

my heartfelt commiseration can little avail him now ; years have gone by since last his feet pressed these time-worn steps —yet has absence diminished the ardour of his feelings? Oh no! the marchioness is not a woman to be easily forgotten: if once loved, she must be loved for ever.”

Edward beheld the streaks of morning illumine the eastern sky ; he reclosed the shutters, and went towards the bed—that bed which had so often received the beauteous form of the too-lovely marchioness. He flung himself on the outside, with no inclination to sleep, his mind being too much occupied by the conversation of old Bridget Carter, and in forming plans by which he should be enabled to gain another sight of her before he left the castle. Was it not strange that his voice should resemble that of the gentleman to whom lady Anendale had fancied herself to be attached? and yet, how many voices were to be found like each other in the world? Therefore where

was

was the singularity? It was in his own mind, which had too great an aptitude to appropriate things and circumstances to himself. If anything was strange, it was his resemblance to Mr. Colvill, whom he now seriously believed to be either the relation or friend of his unknown father.

With his mind thus wandering from object to object, it was no wonder that sleep forsook his pillow, or that when it was time to rise he found himself feverish and unwell. Ashamed to own the cause, he determined to conceal it altogether from Frederic, lest he should damp the new-born felicity of his bosom-friend by dropping a hint that his thoughts were more buoyant and happy than his own. With spirits which then were forced, Edward proceeded to the chamber of young Manningham, and as he listened to the fairy dreams and fairy hopes of his friend, he by degrees became warmed by the subject, until he forgot the source of his
own

own disquietude, and all the train of wild conjectures which had haunted his mind the preceding night.

CHAPTER II.

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MADAME Dubois greeted the presence of her guests with smiles of encouraging approbation, hoping that their slumbers had been propitious to their wishes. She then invited them to partake of an elegant little breakfast, which she had provided expressly for them, and at which the pretended lady Elinor was compelled to preside. When this was concluded, madame proposed to conduct them over the grounds of the castle, and from thence to those apartments which were worthy of observation.

After a walk of nearly two hours, during which time, for the penance they performed in listening to the conversation of one  
whom



whom they despised, they were amply repaid by the rich and varied scenery around them, the party returned by a different route to the castle, when madame, with undiminished gaiety, and unwearied loquacity, proceeded to shew them all that appeared to *her* to be deserving their notice. The pictures occupied the attention of Edward, and in them he found an inexhaustible fund of amusement as well as of admiration. These, however, required time to examine their different beauties; and madame, after ordering wine and cake for their refreshment, smilingly told them that she would leave them until dinner to their own reflections, when she should hope to hear that they were perfectly satisfied with their morning's occupation.

She had scarcely quitted them five minutes, when Mabel appeared, and informed them that madame had walked out to the parsonage-house, in consequence of letters which had that morning arrived  
from

from the marchioness, and that, if they were disengaged, lady Elinor would be happy to see them then, instead of their preconcerted interview after the family had retired to rest. It is needless to observe with what pleasing alacrity the young men followed the footsteps of their conductress, or with what real delight they once more pressed the hand of lady Elinor within their own.

“My kind friends,” said her ladyship, “how much do I thank you for your willingness to oblige me! I am so timid a creature, so fearful of giving offence to madame, and of incurring the terrible displeasure of my mother, that I have been unhappy ever since I promised to see you again, and at so improper an hour. But now, in the face of day, and safe from the watchful guardianship of madame, I think I can indulge myself with half an hour’s conversation with you, which will enable me once more to assure you, Mr. Mackenzie, and you, too, my dear cousin, that  
I am

I am not insensible, nor I hope ungrateful, for your good opinion and friendly wishes."

"Dearest Elinor," said Frederic, still retaining her hand in his, and gently pressing it, "dearest Elinor, allow me to carry with me the soul-reviving hope that at a future time, and that not far distant, the gratitude you mention will give place to a warmer, tenderer feeling. To-morrow I shall be compelled to leave the castle, but my heart will remain with you. Tell me, beloved cousin, can I not, through the means of Mabel, hear from you?"

"I know not—that is, I should be afraid," replied her ladyship, blushing with beautiful confusion: "unfortunately for me, I am not the object of my mother's love, and I dread to do any thing which can incur her resentment. We learn by to-day's post that the marchioness is on her return to England. When my poor brother lived, I had a kind, a tender comforter in him, although he was much younger than

than myself. His unceasing perseverance used sometimes to gain me the privilege of joining my family in their social parties; but now that I have lost him, I have no hope of being admitted to the notice of my mother; yet, Heaven bear me witness, that my heart is as warm towards her as that of my poor brother, and my submission to her will even greater than his, for he was her idol, and could therefore do as he pleased."

"But your father, lady Elinor," exclaimed Edward, in a tone of tender compassion, "your father surely has the power, and I hope the will, to make you happy?"

"Oh no!" said her ladyship, with a deep sigh, and with moistened eyes; "my beloved father never opposes the inclinations of my mother. Once, indeed, he ventured to second the entreaties of my brother, and urged the marchioness to allow me to accompany them to London. But I hope never again to see him as I then saw him. I would rather remain a prisoner

soner for life, than be the cause of a second quarrel between my parents."

"That you shall never be, adored Elinor!" cried Frederic, warmly. "A prisoner for life! Shame on the dastard heart that would not risk a thousand dangers before you should remain another year within these walls! Oh, if on *me* depended the power of lightening the hours of solitude, with what extacy, dearest Elinor, would I remain! with what care would I watch over your happiness, and think myself too blest if only allowed to see you once a-day, to be assured that I sometimes occupied your thoughts! Elinor, dear Elinor! I would not deceive you for the world! You know me not—you cannot trust to my protestations; but here is one who has known me from a boy—Mackenzie is my friend. The soul of honour himself, he would not countenance deceit in another. He will be the pledge and surety of my fidelity."

“ If necessary,” cried Edward, with enthusiasm, “ I will stake my existence on the truth and constancy of my friend. Your ladyship may believe me, for I know full well every secret thought, every secret wish of his. It is your happiness that now he seeks to secure—alas! that I am compelled to add, from the unjustifiable authority of parental severity.”

“ I do believe you, Mr. Mackenzie,” replied lady Elinor, with engaging innocence; “ for what interest could either of you feel in deluding me with false hopes, false assurances? Oh, if you could see into my heart, you would pity me—you would not wish to persuade me into error. I have no natural friend or protector—I have no adviser to direct my conduct, or to teach me the necessary rules of female reserve. My chilled affections are rekindled by the kindness which you seem to feel for me; they would lead me to consent to continue an intimacy, to encourage a friendship which to *me* holds forth the sweetest

sweetest prospect of affectionate confidence—but I fear—”

“ Fear nothing, lovely Elinor !” exclaimed Frederic, with impassioned tenderness. “ I call my Creator to witness the purity of my intentions, and the sincerity of my affection. Trust, then, to one who never yet has misled a confiding heart, who never yet has made a promise to a woman that he has not sacredly kept. Mackenzie, you have seen the marchioness; you bid fair to become one of her favourites—you stand pledged to attend her the moment she arrives; yet you will not refuse to *me* your aid and support in any plan I may form to ensure the mutual happiness of lady Elinor and myself?”

“ Command me to the utmost,” replied Edward. “ My friend shall never find me shrink from any trial in which his peace is concerned.” Then turning to lady Elinor, he respectfully kissed her hand. “ The singular devotion which my heart feels toward your mother dear lady Elinor,”

nor," said he, " will not interfere with the lively interest which I take in your welfare. I shall always rejoice in any opportunity which may occur of proving to your ladyship how much I feel, and how deeply I regret, the unfortunate estrangement of a mother's love. Allow me to add, that, thus situated, thus secluded, thus withheld from all the enjoyments of domestic comfort, you cannot incur the sin of disobedience by listening to the dictates of an honourable passion like that of Mr. Manningham; neither shall I hesitate in such a case to volunteer my services, and to assist you to the utmost of my power."

Her ladyship, in a low faltering voice, expressed her thanks, and her readiness to confide in the sincerity of both.

Frederic now urged, with anxious impatience, that some plan should be fixed by which they could write to each other; and Mabel, who was much attached to her young lady, with cheerful quickness proposed, that the letters of Mr. Manningham



ningham should be left at the post-office under an assumed name, as she could easily procure their safe delivery. It was therefore at last decided, that Edward should receive those of lady Elinor, who, though painfully embarrassed, nevertheless yielded to the suggestions of Mabel, who now quitted them to watch the return of madame.

It was now that Frederic, in order to compose the agitated spirits of lady Elinor, turned the conversation to the subject of his own family. He described its domestic comforts, its affectionate inmates, dwelling with fraternal pride and love upon the character of Flora, until her ladyship, charmed by the description, forgot her reserve, and in expressing the delight she should feel on being introduced to such dear relations, betrayed to the admiring friends a warmth of feeling, an impassioned tenderness of soul, which satisfied their sanguine wishes, and convinced them that, though the warm current of

natural affection may for awhile be diverted from its proper channel, yet it will always return, when the heart is permitted to give way to its unrestrained feelings.

The quick approach of Mabel warned them to retire. Reluctantly they took leave of lady Elinor, who cut off one of the long glossy ringlets of her hair for Frederic to deliver to his youngest sister. The lover pressed the dear treasure to his lips: he would not have exchanged it, could each separate hair have been turned into threads of gold.—“ I must share with Flora this precious gift, my fair cousin,” said he; “ and when next we meet, which I hope will not be at any far distant period, I shall expect to receive for *myself* a still dearer present than this silken curl.”

Mabel now hastily entered, and informed them that madame was returned. The friends had only time to kiss the hand of her amiable young pupil, and to hurry back to their former station, when the governess appeared. With truth they could  
both

both affirm that they had received the highest gratification from their morning's amusement; nor did the artful French-woman suspect their meaning, as she had left Mabel to guard lady Elinor, and had also enjoined her ladyship not to leave her chamber until her return. Of Mabel's fidelity, madame had the best opinion, as it was through her means that the girl was placed about the person of lady Elinor; but Mabel wanted neither sense nor feeling. She loved lady Elinor, and despised her duenna; and no human being ever rejoiced more sincerely than did Mabel at the prospect of her young lady having secured to herself the affections of such a desirable lover as Frederic Manningham.

Instead, therefore, of Mabel becoming the spy over the actions of lady Elinor, she resolved to use her utmost endeavours to favour the wishes of Frederic, and to assist her ladyship in claiming, if necessary, the protection of his family. Mabel had herself a lover, a youth who lived

not far distant from the verge of the castle-grounds, and was the son of a farmer who was a tenant of the marchioness. This young man and Mabel had often conversed together about the secluded life which lady Elinor seemed destined to lead, and in commiserating *her* fate, felt most forcibly the goodness of Providence, which had placed them in a sphere of life so different, and so happy.

It was through the help of her lover that Mabel proposed to carry on the correspondence between her ladyship and Mr. Manningham. She knew that she could trust to his prudence and caution, and she therefore intended to confide to him a piece of intelligence which she was assured would give him the sincerest pleasure, and to request that he would always call at the post-office for the letters of Frederic, which she could easily convey to her hand the same evening, as she was in the habit of seeing him generally every day. This arrangement was quickly made known to  
lady

lady Elinor, who could not deny to Mabel the interest she felt in the success of her friendly plans; neither did she attempt to conceal from her the favourable impression which Frederic had made on her mind.

“ I shall be too happy, dear Mabel,” said her ladyship, “ if I am permitted to receive the testimonies of Mr. Manningham’s kindness without our correspondence being discovered by madame; and should I ever be so blest as to be domesticated in his charming family, I shall think light of all the vexations and disappointments which I eternally meet with at home.”

“ Trust to my respectful affection,” replied Mabel, “ for every assistance which either myself or Thomas can afford you; and as to madame Dubois, it shall be hard indeed if I am not a match for her. To deceive a Frenchwoman will be no easy matter, but I think in this case that I shall be too many for her. If your lady-

ship does not betray yourself, I'll engage that you shall be happily settled in the family of lady Manningham before this day month; and your ladyship knows that when once you are the wife of Mr. Frederic, madame will lose all power over you."

"My kind-hearted Mabel," said lady Elinor, affectionately, "your good wishes and your love for me lead your judgment astray. How readily do you arrange every thing according to your own warm feelings, without ever remembering that I have parents whose consent it will be necessary to obtain!"

"Oh, if your ladyship waits until you obtain *their* consent," cried Mabel, "you may bid adieu to all hope of ever becoming a bride; and it would be an eternal shame if you were suffered much longer to pass the sweetest hours of your life in this dreary old building, where you are treated like a child, and kept under as much as if you had not arrived to years  
of

of discretion. Mercy on me! who in their senses ever thought of calling a young lady of seventeen ‘a baby fit only for the nursery.’ When the marchioness said this, she must have known herself that she was uttering a falsehood. No, no, my lady, you must not wait for *that* which you never will obtain. Heaven has introduced to you a relation and a friend, both of whom seem ready to die, if necessary, to serve you; and I declare, upon my word, if I was a lady like you, that I should be extremely puzzled to know to which of them I should give the preference.”

Lady Elinor smiled upon the lively Mabel, as she said—“If beauty were to decide my choice, I might, like you, be puzzled, my dear Mabel, to ascertain which face or form was most perfect. I should, however, select Mr. Mackenzie for a *friend*, for I feel that I could already love him as a brother, and that I could rely upon his word with fearless confidence. But, Mabel, I know not why, yet my heart feels

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differently

differently towards my cousin; perhaps it is because he is related to me; yet if I was asked which I should prefer as a partner for life, I should say Mr. Manningham."

"I knew that, my lady, an hour ago," cried Mabel, archly. "I no sooner beheld you and Mr. Manningham take leave of each other, than I said to myself, it is Mr. Frederic that lady Elinor has made choice of—it is Mr. Frederic that will become her deliverer from this melancholy prison. But, my lady, you will not forget, when you are lady Elinor Manningham, the promise which you made your faithful Mabel?"

"No, Mabel," replied her ladyship, embracing her, "whatever good awaits me, you and Thomas shall share it with me. No, Mabel, I can never forget you. To your steady affection, and lively converse, I am indebted for a few cheerful moments, and wherever I am, Mabel, there shall you be also."

Mabel



Mabel kissed the hand of lady Elinor with respectful devotion, then left her to execute some orders, preparatory to her making another *shew* at the dinner-table of madame and her guests. Conscious that the latter were now fully convinced of her reluctance to forward any plans of madame, and of her good wishes towards themselves, Mabel felt less embarrassment at obtruding herself upon their notice, especially as it gave Frederic an opportunity to whisper every now and then some fond message to her lady, while Edward was compelled to entertain a less pleasing object than the goodnatured Mabel.

Next morning, by break of day, the chaise was ordered to be at the castle, that the travellers might begin their journey to London. Frederic most earnestly besought Mabel to persuade lady Elinor to give him one more interview before he set off; and Edward felt even more solicitude than his friend to gain another sight of  
of

the old housekeeper, since it might be in her power to inform him of something which he had still to learn concerning his parents. Yet how to obtain a glimpse of her he knew not, unless through the intervention of the friendly Mabel. By dint of a little artifice, he contrived to mention to her the kindness which Bridget had shewn him the preceding evening, and his wish to have an opportunity of speaking to her again before he left the castle.

Never did a lover long more ardently for the appointed hour which would bless him with the sight of a favourite mistress, than did Edward for the moment of his retiring for the night. At length, to the grief of madame, and the joy of the young men, the old clock gave notice that the family should separate. Madame affirmed that the clock was too fast; but Mabel reminded her that it was scarcely ever known to vary in its time. Madame, however, persisted, and another half hour passed in restless impatience on the part of Edward

ward and Frederic, while the enamoured duenna seemed loth to give up their society. She promised to be up by their hour of rising, that she might see that they partook of the breakfast which she had given orders to be got ready, and then, with evident reluctance, suffered them to depart for their respective chambers.

Edward hurried to his room, in the secret hope of finding the communicative Bridget. He no sooner entered than her voice saluted him with—"Here I am, dear. I have been waiting this half hour, because Mabel told me that you wished to see me once again before you went; but I should have come here if she had not, for I longed to hear you speak again."

Edward thanked her in the gentlest accents, and entreated that she would accept of a trifle, as a remembrance as well as reward for the trouble he had given her.

"Money is of no use to me, love, now," said old Bridget. "My wants are few, and they are provided for in the family."

"But

“ But there are others who are less fortunate,” replied Edward, “ and to whom this trifle might bestow comfort and happiness. For instance, should you hear from the poor Alice, whom you spoke of so kindly last night, and hear that she is distressed, would you not rejoice to be able to afford her relief?”

“ Ah, that I would !” exclaimed Bridget, earnestly, “ that I would ! for she was as kind a hearted girl as ever lived. But I never expect to hear from her again. It is now near nineteen years ago since she left the castle, all of a hurry ; nobody knew when, or how, or where she went. My old lady had only been dead a fortnight, and the present marchioness took to her bed the day before, and never left her room for three weeks after. Well, I can’t say but I was glad to hear of this shew of feeling in her, because we all know that she had at times behaved very bad and ungratefully to her aunt, and we thought that she now repented, and was sorry for her  
conduct,

conduct, for she took on sadly, and would let no one come near her but Alice, and an old lady who had lived many years as companion to her aunt, and who died herself soon after she lost her mistress. Poor Mrs. Latimer! she was a dear good soul, but she helped to spoil the marchioness as much as lady Fitz-Arthur."

"Had the marchioness no medical advice," inquired Edward, "during her illness?"

"None that ever I heard of," said Bridget. "I believe it was only her conscience that was affected. Well, never shall I forget the night before my old lady died. I was talking about her to Mrs. Latimer, very melancholy, and looking every now and then to see if she still slept, when Alice came suddenly into the chamber, looking, as I thought, flurried, and begged Mrs. Latimer to go to Miss Fitz-Arthur, who wanted her. The old lady desired me and Alice to remain with my mistress, telling the latter to call her, if she awoke. I  
longed

to see my young lady, but I dared not to disobey her orders, which were, that no person but Alice or Mrs. Latimer should approach her. I asked Alice how she was, and she said that she fretted sadly. ‘Ah, Alice,’ said I, ‘an evil conscience needs no accuser.’ Well, we sat and watched by the bedside of my lady, thinking all the while that Mrs. Latimer staid a long while, and wondering what could possess Miss Fitz-Arthur to sleep in this chamber, and in the dead of the winter, when not a soul was near her; for at that time not a room in the gallery was occupied but this. Mrs. Latimer came to us at last, as pale as her white apron, and all of a tremble. So I got up, and gave her some wine, and asked how was my young lady? Mrs. Latimer motioned to Alice to go to her mistress, and the poor girl did not want bidding a second time. The old lady then told me that Miss Fitz-Arthur was now better, but that she had been violently attacked with spasms in her stomach.

mach. My poor dear mistress now gave a heavy sigh. Alas! it was the last effort of nature ; she was gone before we could raise her from her pillow. She was a good mistress to me, and I honour her memory."

" How did the marchioness bear the news of her aunt's death ?" said Edward, anxious to learn more respecting his mother.

" Mrs. Latimer would not tell her that night," said Bridget, " but she left me to watch by the side of the corpse, while she attended upon Miss Fitz-Arthur. The next day she told me that it would be well if my young lady got over her grief and despair, as she accused herself for not being with her aunt when she died. ' I want her to let me send for a physician,' said Mrs. Latimer, ' but she won't hear of it, and indeed I know that I can prescribe for her disorder as well as a doctor.' Well, my old lady was buried, and her niece declared heiress to every thing which belonged

belonged to her. We thought she would have come down at the opening of the will, but she did not, and soon after Alice disappeared, to the grief and surprise of us all. I asked Mrs. Latimer what had become of her, but she could only say that my lady and she had quarrelled, and that she had left the castle in the dead of the night."

"That had a strange look, I confess," said Edward, with emotion. "But could you never learn the true cause of her removal?"

"Never: we only suspected it. You must know that the gentleman who was in love with my lady used always to behave very kindly to Alice, who was a sharp, sensible, handsome girl, and very serviceable to the lovers, for Alice carried all their letters, and watched when they were together, lest Mrs. Latimer should surprise them. All of a sudden, about five months before my old lady died, Alice told me that her mistress had fallen out with  
with



my favourite, and had determined never to have him. Then, said I, it is because she means to marry the marquis of Anendale. Alice feared so too. Well, the same day I saw my young darling. He kissed my old cheeks as kindly as if I had been his mother.—‘Bridget,’ said he, ‘I must set off for London this evening. My father is there, and requires my immediate presence, but I hope I shall see you soon again, Bridget, for I leave all that I value most on earth behind me.’—‘Ah,’ says I, ‘full well do I know that, darling; but I hope you and my young lady have not quarrelled?’—He sighed deeply, Heaven bless him! I think I hear him now.—‘Bridget,’ said he, in a trembling voice, ‘Bridget, I fear that Miss Fitz-Arthur does not love me as dearly as once she did; yet she ought to love me more; she knows that I would sacrifice every thing for her sake. I have begged on my knees that she would become my wife, but she has refused my petition.

Ah,

Ah, Bridget ! if you knew how I idolize her, you would pity me.'—Well, to make short of my story, he and I talked a good deal together about my young lady, and I tried to console him all in my power, for little did I think how true his words would come to pass, and that I should never see him more. So we parted for the last time. He went to London, and his father had him sent abroad immediately. It is expected that Miss Fitz-Arthur would have been broken-hearted ; but, instead of that, she never shed a tear, but looked as gay and as happy as ever—nay, she grew quite fat, as I used to say, upon her lover's misery, and nothing ever ailed her, until about a week before my lady died. Then she seemed to fret, and kept much in her chamber ; yet Alice told me that she never read any of her lover's letters, nor ever sent him any answers. Oh, what a world of sin she has to answer for on his account ! So, as I had told Alice, it came to pass ;  
for

for in a month's time after her aunt was buried, she set off for London, and six months afterwards she came back again the bride of the marquis of Anendale."

"But Alice had left the castle long before that period?" said Edward.

"Ah, poor girl! so she had," replied Bridget Carter. "Poor girl! I dare say they wrongfully accused her."

"Of what?" inquired Edward, with emotion.

"Why, it was said," continued Bridget, "that Alice and the discarded lover of Miss Fitz-Arthur were too fond of each other, and that it was found out by her lady, who rejected the offer of his hand on that account; but she soon forgave Alice, and meant to keep her as if nothing had happened: however, Alice went off all of a sudden one night, or early in the morning, before any of us were stirring, and one of the housemaids did say, but I don't believe it, that she heard a child cry

cry the day before Alice quitted the castle."

Edward started convulsively; he turned pale and faint—his breathing became difficult, but the voice of the old housekeeper again called for his attention.

"Such is the report among the servants," said Bridget, "some of whom knew of Miss Fitz-Arthur having a secret lover, but they knew not who he was, and they feared her anger too much to tell of their stolen meetings. True or false, Alice had more friends than enemies at the castle, and some even ventured to whisper that she had come to an untimely end, for we knew that the marchioness was terribly resentful."

Bridget might have gone on for an hour longer, without meeting with any interruption from Edward; he was too deeply affected by what he had just heard, too sorely grieved and heart-struck at the hints thrown out by Bridget against the  
purity

purity of his mother's character, to articulate a word in reply.

"Well, Heaven preserve you, love!" cried she, rising slowly from her chair; and then, leaning on her stick, she added—"You will carry with you the prayers and blessings of a weak old woman, who may never live to hear your sweet voice again; but she will remember you night and morning when she addresses her Creator; and when you see the marchioness, you will not let her worm out of you anything that I have told you concerning poor Alice."

Edward, at the mention of his mother's name, started wildly from his seat, and grasping the withered hand of Bridget, said, in a hurried voice—"Do *you* believe the rumour raised against the chastity of Alice?"

Bridget, although her eyes were too dim to discover the workings of Edward's features, or the internal agony which he endured, nevertheless felt that his hand

trembled in her own—"Do I believe it?" said she, wondering at the earnestness of his inquiry. "Why, darling, if I *did* believe it, I should not think the worse of poor Alice for having listened to such a voice as your's, and for having placed confidence in a man who looked too much a woman's friend to ruin and leave her. But looks are false, and so are honied tongues; and if poor Alice was indeed beguiled of her innocence, I say, be the fault on the head of him who robbed her of her virtue, not on the poor girl who was led astray. God bless you, darling! take care that your conscience keeps clear of so foul a crime as that of injuring a young and tender maiden, whose sole treasure is her good name, whose sole portion her innocence."

So saying, Bridget Carter hobbled out of the chamber, without noticing the attitude or countenance of Edward, who had sunk back in his chair, in a state of mental agitation bordering on phrenzy.

CHAP.

CHAPTER III.  
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EDWARD no sooner felt sensible that he was alone, than he rose and paced the room with the hurried step of deep-piercing anguish; his brain seemed on fire, yet his heart was cold as ice; at times it nearly ceased to beat—then again the rapid circulation of the vital fluid brought on so terrible a palpitation, that he was obliged to pause, and lean against the nearest object for support. At length, striking his forehead with violence, he exclaimed, in a voice broken by tears—“Ah, mother! dear mother! too well do I now comprehend the meaning of your mysterious silence respecting the author of my being—your reluctance, shame, confusion—all, all is now explained, and I—what am I?—a thing without a name—

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without

without a claim to any but that of my deluded mother; the only birthright I possess is obloquy and shame—the only portion, a mother's tears. Stay, is that all?—Does not the curse of the ill-treated marchioness follow my steps?—would she not hate and despise me, if she knew that I was the son of her faithless lover—the son of that Alice whom her liberal mind had raised to be the friend and confident of herself? Oh, if she so far forgot the humanity of her sex, and counselled my weak erring parent to abandon me for life, some excuse can now be formed for one who had cause to hate me from my birth, and whose continued patronage to my mother proves that she has not a “*devil's heart*.” My soul absolves her from her imputed crime, and re-admits her dear-loved image—again she is my idol, and the mistress of my destiny. If I am condemned to feel her hate, her scorn, her contempt, it shall not be accompanied with the accusation of having
deceived

deceived her. I will acknowledge myself as the son of Alice, and, if necessary, expiate with my life the injury she sustained by the mutual fault committed by my parents."

Edward cast a shuddering glance round the dimly-illuminated chamber.—"Perhaps," said he, "in this very room my father first breathed the language of flattery to my young, and, until then, innocent mother. What foe to constancy and truth at that moment ruled his destiny? Oh, how could he leave perfection like the marchioness—how breathe the vow of love on any lip but her's, whose touch must then have been enchantment? Oh, father! if at this instant thy spirit can look down from its blest abode, infuse into the soul of thy unhappy son the balm of comfort and consolation!"

Edward now flung himself on the bed and burst into tears; he felt that he had been abandoned by that father whose spirit he had thus adjured—that he had been

flung solely upon the care and affection of a young and inexperienced mother, who, if her heart had not been true to maternal feelings, would have abandoned him also.

“Had such been the case,” exclaimed Edward, “how different would now have been my prospects! Brought up on charity, educated by presuming ignorance, apprenticed to some hateful trade, how would my days have passed! how bitter would have been my existence! But Heaven did not abandon me, though my father did; Heaven nerved the heart of my mother to withstand the advice of her injured benefactress; Heaven raised me up a father in the kind, the noble Mackenzie; and Heaven has abundantly blessed my endeavours to support myself, and bestowed on me friends whose kindness ought to make amends for the pangs I now feel.”

Exhausted by his emotions, he at length sunk into a state of forgetfulness;
and

and though his dreams were wild and confused, yet his slumbers remained unbroken until the servant roused him by the desire of madame Dubois, who was already up and waiting for him in the breakfast-parlour. Edward was not long in joining her and his friend, who rallied him good-naturedly upon his tardiness to quit the castle; but his raillery ceased the instant that he became informed of his indisposition, which was too visible, as soon as the flush had left his cheek, which then became deathly pale.

The young men left the castle of the marchioness with feelings far different from those on their arrival. Frederic, by dint of persuasion and hard begging, had gained another interview with lady Elinor, in which he had renewed his vows of fidelity and attachment, and had gained her consent to return in a short time, should anything occur to render her situation more irksome than it now was. With the light buoyancy of ardent hope,

of happiness already anticipated with the sanguine feelings of youth as yet unchilled by disappointment, Frederic imparted to his friend the result of his last interview with the daughter of the marchioness. He expatiated on her beauty, her innocence of manners, and lastly, upon the cruelty of her mother in hiding her from the world, at an age when she was capable of enjoying all its pleasurable amusements.

“ I mean,” said Frederic, “ to get my dear mother into one of her best tempers, and then I shall confide to her the object of my journey, and its ultimate success. She dislikes the marchioness for her want of maternal affection, and therefore cannot fail to feel interested in the fate of her neglected daughter. I expect that my mother, who, if she pleases, can act as nobly as any one, will agree to my request of receiving this sweet girl under her protection—and that she will not hesitate to give her consent to our union.

In

In that case, who will be happier than myself, Mackenzie?"

Edward smiled languidly on his enamoured friend.—“ Could my prayers prevail, you would be the happiest of the happy,” said he ; “ for never did man possess a kinder, truer, nobler heart than thine, my Frederic.”

Edward at that moment felt as if his own would burst. He had never until now concealed any of his vexations from Manningham ; but his present sorrow was sacred—it was such as he dared not even breathe to the ear of his bosom friend ; for how could he whisper forth a sound that would reflect on the chastity of his mother ? His own errors were laid open to the eye of friendship, but those of another, and that other a parent, were of too sacred a nature even to meet the ear of Frederic.

Unable to give vent as usual to his feelings in the presence of his dear-loved friend, Edward strove to repress them as much as possible, and for the first time in

his life he felt relieved when the chaise set down young Manningham at the door of his father's house. Edward excused himself from alighting, and proceeded to the dwelling of Mrs. Alexander Mackenzie.

The warm affection with which every individual welcomed his return cheered for awhile his agitated mind; for where is the heart incapable of feeling the delightful influence of affection, although it emanates from a being inferior to itself? And Edward was not above shewing that the respectful tenderness of honest Oliver gave him as pure a gratification as if Oliver had been his equal instead of his domestic.

Mr. Lindsay tenderly embraced the comforter and consoler of his adverse fortunes, and after listening attentively to the description of his journey, and the reception which he had met with at the castle, he put into his hands a letter from his mother, which had arrived that morning, telling him at the same time, that

he

he had received one from his uncle, sir James Lindsay, and with it a pressing invitation to come immediately to Ireland, which invitation he intended to accept, but had delayed writing until Edward's return; he should now answer it by that night's post: and Edward, who firmly believed that change of scene and company were essential to his recovering his accustomed cheerfulness, made no objection to his accepting the invitation of his uncle, though under any other circumstances he would have lamented the deprivation of his society, as it robbed him of the exquisite gratification of contributing to his comforts, and softening the poignancy of his distress.

Edward opened with additional eagerness the letter of his mother—of that mother whom he now believed to have been despoiled of her innocence, and then abandoned, by the lover of Miss Fitz-Arthur. His eyes dimmed with tears as he traced the well-known characters,

and his cheek crimsoned with the warm blush of shame, as he remembered who and what he was; yet his heart throbbed with delight when he came to that part of her epistle which informed him of her intention to begin immediately her journey to London, as her young companion was too terrified at the idea of the water, for her to hazard her health and tranquillity by a voyage against her inclination. Mrs. Mackenzie expressed a hope that her sister-in-law would be able to accommodate her in her house, and Edward instantly proposed to leave the apartments, that the wish of his mother might be gratified; and as his new lodgings were in readiness to receive him, this would not be attended with any inconvenience to himself. As for Mr. Lindsay, he meant to avail himself of his uncle's invitation without loss of time; therefore, the removal of his dear young friend would not disturb any of his intended arrangements.

The

The day before Mr. Lindsay set off for Ireland, he employed himself in destroying a quantity of papers, which he only considered as useless lumber. Among a bundle of letters, one attracted his attention, and this he now recollected was of too much importance to share the same fate as its companions: it was the letter which had been found by Margaret Grey among the clothes of her grandson, and which she had consigned to the care of Mr. Lindsay a short time previous to her decease. Mr. Lindsay once more perused the letter, and then, calling to Edward, who was assisting him in the disposal of his papers, he presented him with the letter of the dean of H——, telling him at the same time, by what means it came into his possession, and his own promise of concealing it from his knowledge until circumstances authorized his divulging the secret of who was his godfather.

“ I now consider myself at liberty to confide to your prudence,” said Mr. Lindsay,

say, "this document, which perhaps may lead to the discovery of who was your father. At least, my beloved Edward, it will inform you of one thing, of which you have often wished to be acquainted, namely, the rank and station of the person who was your unknown godfather. I leave it entirely to yourself to decide upon the propriety of concealing or betraying this circumstance to your mother, who has evidently taken great pains to prevent your receiving the promised favour and affection of the benevolent dean of H——."

It may easily be conceived that Edward's surprise was not trifling upon his discovering that his godfather was the honourable Maurice Colvill, the father of lady James Osborne and of Mr. Colvill, both of whom had manifested towards himself the kindest feelings. Again his curiosity was excited to a painful degree, to learn the cause of his mother's shunning a connexion which would have been so highly

highly advantageous to her son. His internal monitor once more suggested that her mysterious secrecy could alone proceed from his being connected with the family of the Colvills. Yet how, in what manner, and by what means, should he dare to assert his right to their notice and friendship? and if such were really the case—if indeed he could claim kindred with them, how strange, how singular it appeared, that Providence should so ordain it that his godfather should be the dean of H——!

Edward felt in a manner bewildered by the variety of his conjectures. The more his mind dwelt on the last conversation which he had with his mother, and the discourse of old Bridget Carter, the more perplexed and disordered were his ideas. Yet, amidst the confusion of his brain, he felt that, whatever might be his future destiny, he had hitherto been the peculiar care of Heaven. Friends he possessed, and faithful friends, on whose attachment
he

he could rely. His prospects also were bright, and his circumstances easy; he had only one alloy to his happiness—his ignorance respecting his birth, and his fears lest his mother had been the means of withdrawing from the marchioness the lover of her early years, who was most probably the possessor of her first affections.

Edward, however, had but little time to give way to melancholy ideas. His approaching separation from Mr. Lindsay gave him some uneasiness, but when he considered that his early friend and benefactor would derive considerable advantages from his removal, he ceased to regret it, especially as Mr. Lindsay promised to keep up with him a regular correspondence, which would contain a faithful account of all that passed during his absence.

Edward would have pleaded for the undutiful Clara, had he not been deterred by a fear of wounding the feelings of her father,

father,

father, who appeared firm as ever in his resolution of not seeing her. He took the most affectionate leave of Edward, who accompanied him part of the way; but the name of his daughter never once escaped his lips, and Edward felt a very natural reluctance to start a subject which would increase the pain of parting.

His own removal from the house of Mrs. Alexander Mackenzie followed that of Mr. Lindsay; and Edward, with his trusty servant, honest Oliver, soon took possession of their new abode, which was not far distant from the town house of sir Joseph Rennie. This gentleman's kindness knew of no abatement; he loved and esteemed Edward, and had his future welfare strongly at heart; and now that he was left to himself, with no other guardian than his own honour to shield him against the temptations of the world, sir Joseph seemed to feel a warmer interest in his concerns, kindly resolving to watch over him as much as lay in his power.

Sir

Sir Joseph knew from experience the many dangers which crowd within the circle of fashionable amusements, and he therefore trembled lest his young friend might relax in those studies which were to establish his name in the list of British artists.

Edward, however, continued firm in his favourite pursuit, notwithstanding the allurements of pleasure, and the blandishments of beauty. He was now settled in his new lodgings, and his first hour of leisure was given to Mr. Colvill and lady James Osborne, who received him with every demonstration of regard, and actually compelled him to remain and pass the day with them, telling him, that in the evening he would meet a small party of friends, to whom his presence would be an agreeable surprise.

Edward was indeed most agreeably surprised, when he discovered that the friends mentioned by lady James were the Mannings, who were accompanied by
lady

lady and sir Arthur Vivian, and his brother, who by this time had forgotten the disappointment which he had met with in his first choice, and who in the course of the evening gave many strong indications of having formed another attachment, which, as Edward then considered to be hopeless, occasioned him real uneasiness. Mr. Vivian was a young man of pleasing address, superior understanding, handsome person, and amiable disposition; he was in possession of a large estate, bequeathed to him by a relation, independent of other family expectations—and in fact was esteemed by all *prudent* parents as an eligible match for their daughters. Edward had always regarded Mr. Vivian as a most desirable acquaintance, and none more sincerely lamented his unfortunate attachment to Clara Lindsay than did Edward Mackenzie.

With these friendly sentiments towards him, it was natural that Edward should feel pained for the moment, on witnessing
his

his marked attentions to Flora Manningham, whom he considered as the affianced bride of lord George; but Frederic was not long in imparting to his friend the pleasing intelligence of his lordship's dismissal. It was the first time that he had seen Edward since their return from the Castle, as he had accompanied his mother the same day to the seat of sir Arthur Vivian, and had only been in London a few hours before their visit to lady James.

“When I came home,” said Frederic, “the first news which I heard was, that my father had declined the proposals of lord George, as he had discovered some improprieties in his lordship's mode of life, which made him unwilling to commit the happiness of my sister to his care. You know what has ever been my opinion, Mackenzie, of his lordship; therefore may judge that this intelligence afforded me infinite satisfaction, especially as I never believed that Flora had any regard for him. I hastened to my sister, and quickly discovered

covered that I was right in my conjectures, and, as she afterwards told me, had only permitted the attentions of this booby lord, that she might be freed from others of a less objectionable nature. ‘In fact, my dear brother,’ said Flora, ‘I thought that no one who really knew me would ever suppose me either such a fool or a knave as to be in love with lord George; for this reason I made use of him as a shield to guard me from the attacks of wit and manly eloquence, which I had not spirits to encounter, and I did so with little reluctance, because I was convinced that lord George had no real affection for me, and that he was even incapable of feeling any resentment for my supposed inconstancy, should the real state of my heart ever be made known to him.’—After Flora had acknowledged thus much, I taxed her with concealing from me the motives which had first led her to allow of his lordship’s addresses; and, after the usual shyness of her sex, accompanied by sighs, blushes, and

and so forth, Flora confessed that her affection had long been bestowed upon an object who was unconscious of her tenderness, and who was in fact attached to another."

Edward felt an uneasy sensation at his heart at these last words of Frederic; he cast a glance towards the lovely Flora, which did not diminish his embarrassment; but again the low whisper of his friend met his ear.

"With much persuasion I gained from my sister the name of him who had so long occupied her thoughts. My own wishes had for years been placed on an object whom I thought worthy of her heart, and whom my own friendship had selected as the husband of my Flora. I expected to hear her name this chosen friend, this favourite of my own, and I verily believe that I turned pale with vexation at the mention of another. I need not tell you, Edward, that it was Vivian.

"The same day I accompanied my mother
and

and Flora to the seat of sir Arthur. His brother was there, and returned with us to town. Constantia, who is extremely partial to him, has so blazoned forth his good qualities to my mother, and has repeated so many instances of his amiableness of disposition, and his warm regard for our family, that I think there is little fear of his being a second time disappointed in his choice. Constantia was the confidant of his secret attachment to Flora, which, I understand, was formed soon after the shameful elopement of Clara, whose conduct quickly erased from his mind every tender idea connected with so worthless an object. I am disappointed, Mackenzie, but I must bear with my vexation, since Flora has bestowed her love on a man whom we all esteem and respect."

Edward, though considerably agitated, nevertheless did ample and willing justice to the merits of Mr. Vivian; yet it was some time before he could regain his composure, before he could acquire sufficient self-

self-command to address either Flora or her lover. Nor was Edward the only embarrassed person of the party. Lady Vivian had not seen him since her marriage, and, though firmly attached to her husband, yet the recollection of her former sentiments in favour of Edward made her for a few moments feel confused in his presence. This, however, soon wore off, and she was then enabled to converse with him on the subject of past scenes and future expectations, with ease and vivacity.

The party were on the point of breaking up, when lady Jane —— was announced. “My dear friends,” said her ladyship, not observing Edward, who was conversing with Frederic at the further end of the room, “I am just come from the opera, and could not pass your door without stepping in to inquire how you all are. My dear Flora, have you got rid of your distressing headache? Oh, I see that you have—Vivian’s eloquence is a sovereign charm against all bodily pain.”

“Her

“ Her ladyship does not appear to be offended at the dismissal of her brother,” said Edward to his companion.

“ Not in the least,” replied Frederic. “ She is conscious of his weakness of intellect, and was only surprised that Flora could tolerate his society as she did. Lady Jane is neither deficient in good-sense nor good-nature : but see, she turns her eyes this way.”

Edward bowed as he met the glance of lady Jane, and instinctively moved forward, as he felt it necessary to apologize for not having called on her ladyship. Lady Jane endeavoured to look and to speak to him with an air of indifference, but Edward had placed himself by her side, and, somehow or other, had, either intentionally or inadvertently, taken her hand : his touch dispelled the momentary anger of lady Jane—her eyes betrayed the power he had over her ; and as she suffered him to conduct her to her carriage, her condescension returned, and she in-

vited him to attend her the next evening to the theatre, an invitation which it was not to be supposed a young man of nineteen could very well decline. The hand of lady Jane felt the pressure of Edward's lips as he assisted her to ascend the steps.—“Stay, Mr. Mackenzie,” said lady Jane, as he had retreated a few paces; “I think you have dropped your glove.”

Edward, supposing that such might be the case, received the glove from lady Jane, and once more bade her good-night; he then re-entered the house of lady James Osborne, and, after a few minutes conversation with Frederic, he took leave, and returned to his lodgings.

Edward had placed the glove given to him by lady Jane in his pocket, and he took it out with some papers on his return home. Instead of his own glove, he perceived the white one worn by her ladyship, and, on feeling something hard within it, he discovered, to his great amazement, a valuable jewel, which he had often seen
on

on the fair hand of lady Jane. Edward would that instant have gone to the house of the duke, and returned the ring, but that he knew it was late, and his visit at so unseasonable an hour might give offence to his grace; he therefore determined to call the next morning upon her ladyship, and inform her of her mistake.

Lady Jane was aware of his visit, and received him in the drawing-room alone. Edward explained the cause of his intruding on her time, and, as he presented to her the ring, gallantly excused himself for retaining the glove. Her ladyship took the ring, and, gazing on it for a moment, said—"It is to this bauble alone that I am indebted for the pleasure of your present visit, Mr. Mackenzie. What will you think of me, when I tell you that I gave it to you with the hope that it would bring you this morning to my father's house, from which you have unkindly absented yourself too long?"

"What *should* I think," replied Ed-

ward warmly, " but that your ladyship has over-rated my deserts, and set a value upon the devotion of one who feels too keenly his own inferiority."

" I cannot admit that to be true," said lady Jane. " Merit such as yours will always find its level in the highest ranks of society. The advantages which I possess are merely those of rank and fortune, neither of which, in a mental point of view, can place me above my waiting-maid; but the advantages of which you can boast, Mr. Mackenzie, are those of genius, talents, and of mind; they raise you above the paltry considerations of fortune, and even reflect a lustre upon those whom you honour by your friendship. If the glove which your gallantry has led you to retain possesses any value in your sight, let me entreat your acceptance of what it contained. Keep this trifle as a memento of my esteem—accept it for my sake; and, that your delicacy may not be hurt by any supposed obligation,

tion, I will exchange it for that which you now wear, unless it is rendered valuable by being the gift of a dearer friend than myself."

Edward drew from his finger the ring which had caught her attention, and, placing it on her hand, which sparkled with jewels, said that he should feel himself highly honoured by the exchange, were the ring of her ladyship of less value, but that he could not think of receiving in its stead a jewel of so much worth.

Lady Jane gently forced the ring upon the finger of Edward, saying, with a smile, "Time will convince me of the real value which you place upon my gift. We view it with different optics. In my eyes, this plain gold ring, which once was yours, is far more valuable than that which I request you to preserve as long as you shall feel inclined to number me among the list of your sincere friends."

“ And that will be as long as I exist,” exclaimed Edward, with energy.

“ Take care, Mr. Mackenzie,” said lady Jane, “ and do not promise more than you can perform. If once you admit me as your friend, I may expect more than you are willing to bestow ; and then——”

They were now interrupted by the entrance of some company, and Edward in a few minutes took leave, not, however, before lady Jane had reminded him of his engagement for the evening.

CHAPTER IV.

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“ NEWS! good news! delightful news, dear master!” cried Oliver, as he opened the door for Edward ; “ Mrs. Mackenzie is arrived, and has just sent for you. I told the man that you were from home,  
but

but that you would soon be back, and that you would be with her in the twinkling of an eye."

Edward's impatience to behold his mother would not permit him to make a moment's stay. He flew rather than walked to his former abode, and in a few minutes felt himself once more pressed to the bosom of his parent, who seemed to view him with additional kindness, while on his part he could with safety affirm that she was dearer to him than ever, because he believed that she had been unfortunate.—“ But where, dear mother,” said he, “ is Miss Cameron ?”

“ She is with me,” replied Mrs. Mackenzie, “ and only in the next chamber. I will tell her you are here, and that you have inquired for her.”

In a few minutes she returned, and with her a young lady, whom she introduced to Edward as Janet Cameron. Edward was already prepared to love her, but as he recognized the fine blue eye of his fa-

ther Mackenzie, whose melting softness was partly concealed by the long dark eyelashes which rested on the blooming cheek of Janet, his heart seemed to swell with warmer feelings than he had ever known before. It was not beauty which thus captivated his senses—it was not symmetry of form, nor any particular grace which lurked around the person of Miss Cameron, although she was handsome, well made, and perfectly the gentlewoman—but she had the tender eyes of serjeant Mackenzie, his benevolent look, and his affectionate voice, which stole into the heart of Edward, and fixed for ever its best and dearest affections. His lips touched the glowing cheek of Janet Cameron, and he still held her soft hand within his own.

“My children,” said Mrs. Mackenzie, “I have prepared you to meet as friends, not as strangers, and it gladdens my soul to feel assured that my wishes will not be fruitless. Edward, you have already discovered the resemblance which I mentioned :

tioned: Janet is considered to be very like her uncle Mackenzie."

"So like, my dear mother," exclaimed Edward, "that, if you had not told me to the contrary, I should have supposed her to be my sister."

Both Mrs. Mackenzie and Miss Cameron looked for a moment confused.— "She is the daughter of my fondest affection," said Mrs. Mackenzie, "and no child of mine can ever be dearer to me than Janet Cameron. She is all and every thing that I could wish my own Janet to be."

"Dear aunt," said Janet, in a low voice that penetrated into the heart of Edward like the well-remembered tones of his adopted father's, "dear aunt, do not let your kindness for me lead you to overrate my merits. Time will convince my cousin Edward that I am less perfect than you think me; but, whatever may be my failings, want of gratitude and affection will not be among them."

“ I will pledge myself for the truth of your assertion,” said Edward, warmly. “ The countenance which resembles that of my beloved father, can never be a mask for treachery and deceit—the voice whose softened tones remind me of his can never give utterance to a falsehood. I will be surety, dear cousin, that you prove to be all that my mother has described you.”

“ Do not bind yourself too hastily, cousin Edward,” replied Janet, blushing confusedly, as his piercing eye met the timid glance of her own : “ I am a woman, therefore liable to error, even when I seek most to do good. But such a heart as yours will find excuses for my faults, if they do not originate from vicious inclinations ; and the likeness which I bear to my dear, dear uncle, and the love which still I cherish for his memory, as well as my earnest wish to be found worthy of the regard of his adopted son, must plead for me, my dear cousin Edward, should you ever be deceived in the opinion which  
you

you have formed of me and my good qualities."

"Oh, look but like my father Mackenzie—speak but like him, and my soul will cling to you, lovely Janet, even were you otherwise than my mother has represented. So dearly, so sacredly do I cherish the memory of my adopted father, that, next to himself, you, Janet, will be adored."

"A pretty confession!" cried Mrs. Mackenzie, while her dark eyes sparkled with a portion of their youthful fire; "a pretty confession! and before your mother, Edward! Well, my dear boy, you have my consent to love Janet as tenderly as you please; she has a heart that is capable of beating as fondly, as faithfully as your own; and if my beloved husband could look down from his blest abode, and witness the present scene, his spirit would rejoice in the bond of kindness and affection which is thus cemented,

I trust for ever, between you and that Janet whom, next to you, he loved dearly.”

Edward embraced his mother; tears filled his eyes, while those of Mrs. Mackenzie and Janet were equally humid. He turned towards Miss Cameron, and joining her hand with that of his parent, said—“Dearest cousin, the heart of my widowed mother has adopted you for her child. Be unto her a daughter such as you have hitherto been, and you will then possess a double claim to my affection.—Oh wherefore, dear mother, have you so long denied me the privilege of seeing my sister? Do you not remember the last words of her father—how tenderly he conjured me to love her for his sake, and to remember as long as I existed that Janet Mackenzie was his child? Well do I remember it—most ardently do I long to behold her who has so strong a claim upon my love! Why have you refused me, mother, the sight of my sister?  
why



why have you in preference introduced me to my cousin, who will more than divide that tenderness which I wished solely to belong to Janet Mackenzie?"

"Another time we will talk upon that subject," said Mrs. Mackenzie gaily, "but let us now enjoy the pleasures of the present moment. You will not injure Janet Mackenzie by loving Janet Cameron."

She now questioned him concerning his own prospects, and Edward replied with his habitual candour, and his natural dislike of concealment. His mother looked grave and thoughtful, as he repeated to her the fulfilment of his promise to the young son of the marchioness. She desired her niece to withdraw, while she asked, in a tremulous voice, whom he had seen and what he had heard at the Castle?

It was now Edward's turn to look and to feel both agitated and embarrassed. He hated falsehood, yet how could he now keep to truth—how even hint to his  
mother

mother the conversation which had passed between himself and old Bridget Carter? Mrs. Mackenzie inquired if Edward had seen the old housekeeper, and he felt bound to reply in the affirmative.

“ Poor old Bridget !” said Mrs. Mackenzie, “ I thought she had been dead long ago. She was a kind-hearted affectionate creature, and when I lived at the Castle, I used to take a pleasure in obliging her. Is she as talkative as ever ?”

“ She has not lost the privilege of her sex, my dear mother,” said Edward, trying to force a smile. “ Something in the tones of my voice struck Bridget as resembling those of the early lover of Miss Fitz-Arthur, and upon that account she honoured me with her particular attention, and, with all the garrulity of age, made me acquainted with her strong regard for this gentleman, who she said was the secret lover of her young lady.”

“ Did she mention his name ?” said Mrs. Mackenzie, in haste.

“ No,

“No, mother, it was reserved for you to gratify my curiosity on that point. But she mentioned you in terms of kindness and regret, little imagining that I was your son, or that I had any cause to take a lively interest in all that she said concerning you.”

“And what did Bridget say concerning me?” inquired his mother with an unsteady voice.

“That she loved you,” replied Edward, with a sigh of painful recollection. “Your unexpected departure from the castle gave her great uneasiness; all the domestics lamented your absence, and feared they knew not what. Some attributed it to the vindictive spirit of Miss Fitz-Arthur, others to——”

“To what?” said Mrs. Mackenzie fearfully.

“Ah, mother! what, now, if I have forgotten the surmises of the servants, or if the perversity of human nature should lead me to keep alive your curiosity, you  
could

could not be offended, mother, since the peace of *your* future life does not depend upon your being acquainted with the idle reports of the inmates of the Castle."

"I feel the justice of your reproof, my son," said Mrs. Mackenzie, endeavouring to check her emotion. "The time will come, nay it seems to be fast approaching, when you will think differently of my silence. Whatever were the rumours to which my sudden departure gave rise, I feel a consolation in knowing that the real motive of my absence remains unknown, and that no imprudence or want of forethought on my part betrayed the secret which at that moment I would have died to preserve."

"And yet, mother, *chance* will sometimes discover what prudence and forethought have strove to conceal."

"True, dear Edward; but, in this instance, *chance* has not revealed what it has been the chief study of my life to conceal. You look incredulous, but your own coolness

coolness upon the subject is the most striking proof of the truth of my assertion ; and as to the *rumours* of the Castle, they can never affect my repose. I may lament for a moment that I have drawn upon myself the censure of those who once regarded me with esteem and affection, nay I may add respect ; but if I were even now placed in the same situation, and under the same circumstances, I should not hesitate to devote myself to the same cause."

" Mother !" exclaimed Edward, in a tone of astonishment.

Mrs. Mackenzie smiled on him tenderly. " I know not why," said she, embracing him, " but I feel at this instant more light and happy than I have done for years. Perhaps it arises from the conviction that I have performed my duty faithfully to all whom I was bound to love and to obey. Perhaps it is from the hope that Janet Cameron, who to me is so deservedly dear, will one day or other become equally so  
to

to my son. No matter from what source I derive my present pleasing emotions, so that you, my dear Edward, partake of them with me."

Edward could not repress a sigh, yet he returned the embrace of his mother, who next inquired what sort of a being he had found the daughter of the marchioness? This was a subject calculated to rouse the languid spirits of our young artist, and as he described with warmth the beauties of lady Elinor, his countenance glowed with a deeper colour, and his fine eyes shone again with all their wonted brilliancy.

"You describe with a lover's energy, my dear Edward," gravely remarked his mother. "Heaven forbid, my son, that you should have placed your affections upon a daughter of the marchioness of Anendale!"

"No, mother," replied Edward, deeply sighing as he spoke—"the power which rules my destiny has preserved me from  
a fate

a fate like that which you have taught me to believe would follow a disclosure of who I am. Some guardian-angel shielded my heart from the attractive loveliness of lady Elinor. I felt and owned that she was beautiful, for she is the chastened image of her mother, but I viewed her with a brother's eyes, and, what is still more singular, she confessed at parting a reciprocity of the same kind and friendly sentiments. I have pledged myself to serve her at the hazard of my life, and strictly will I observe my promise."

"Beware of the marchioness, my dear son," cried Mrs. Mackenzie: "I see by the papers that she is daily expected in England. Beware, I conjure you, of her resentment, and keep in mind the warning which I gave you before I returned to Scotland."

Edward promised to be on his guard, because his promise seemed necessary to the tranquillity of his mother. He longed to acquaint her of his having discovered  
who

who was his godfather ; and, as the present opportunity appeared favourable to his wish, he mentioned the departure of Mr. Lindsay, as the preparatory introduction to his naming the letter of the dean of H——.

“ Chance, in this instance, has been more favourable to me than my mother,” said Edward, smilingly. “ I know not, nor can I even guess at the importance which you have attached to my remaining ignorant of my godfather’s name ; but you see, mother, that, notwithstanding all your prudence and forethought, the secret is made known to me at last.”

“ It must be *Providence*, not *chance*, my dear Edward, that has governed all the circumstances of your short life. Providence will still do more for you, my son, and the chief wish of your heart may be gratified when you least expect it. Providence has already thought fit to introduce you to those very beings from whom it has been my principal study to seclude



seclude you, from the best and purest motives, from an over-attention to what I considered to be my duty on the one hand, and from my anxiety to secure your happiness on the other. Heaven has willed it otherwise than I expected, and Heaven will not desert you, my dearest Edward, at the moment when you will most require its aid. Should the same mysterious agency which has guided the past continue to direct the future, and conduct you once again to the presence of the worthy, the benevolent dean of H——, conceal from him and all his family my residence in London; not that any intimacy can possibly exist between them and the marchioness—my going abroad will account in a great degree for my dropping our correspondence with the dean.

“Am I then still to remain ignorant of who was my father?” inquired Edward, with great earnestness. “May I not even hear the name of him who was the lover of Miss Fitz-Arthur, and whose affection she relinquished,

relinquished, that she might become the marchioness of Anendale?"

"My vow prevents my disclosing either," said Mrs. Mackenzie.

Edward rose hastily from his chair; a feeling of momentary anger pervaded his mind, and he walked towards the window. His mother knew his thoughts, and, unobserved by him, stole softly from the apartment, and returned as silently with Miss Cameron.

"Plead for me, Janet," said she, as they approached the window—"plead for me with Edward, for he is angry with his mother."

Edward turned quickly round; he met the glance of Janet's dark-blue eye—he remembered the solemn adjurations of his adopted father, and, as he pressed the hand of Janet Cameron in his own, he kissed the cheek of his widowed parent with all his former kindness. Then, turning to the blushing Janet, he said—"My mother has already found the vulnerable  
part

part of my nature, which, if it combats for a moment against the prudence of maternal wisdom, yields in an instant to the resistless force of my fair cousin's all-powerful glance. Oh, Janet, beware how you exert the charm from which I cannot fly. Too well did my mother prophesy the influence which you would possess over my heart, from your likeness to my sainted father."

"Never shall that influence be exerted except to secure your happiness," cried Janet, with an energy of expression, and animation of countenance, which thrilled through the frame of Edward, and gave birth to a new feeling, a new passion, such as he had imagined, but had never felt before.

"Will you go with us to the theatre this evening, Edward?" said Mrs. Mackenzie.

"How delighted should I feel were I at liberty to escort you and my sweet cousin there to-night!" replied Edward; "but I am unfortunately engaged to attend lady  
Jane

Jane — to Drury-lane. To-morrow I shall be most happy to devote myself to your service."

"We must relinquish our claims upon your time, my dear Edward," said Janet gaily, "in favour of those of your more noble acquaintance; but we shall see you sometimes, shall sometimes enjoy the luxury of your society, shall feel ourselves beloved, and shall know that you would give us more of your time if you had but the power?"

Edward flung one arm round the neck of Janet, and the other round that of his mother.—"Beloved beings!" he exclaimed, with a tenderness of look that rendered every fine feature doubly attractive, "were I to study my inclinations, I should devote to you every hour of my life; but the warmth of my feelings, the new-born happiness of my soul, must not lead me to forget the claims of my generous and steady friends, whose liberality and friendship have placed me in the situation in which I now  
am,

am, and whose kindness has afforded me the pleasing prospect of independence, at an age when most young men are vainly seeking for patronage and assistance. All the leisure moments that I can, without ingratitude, call my own, shall be spent with you and my dear cousin, and those moments of domestic felicity will reward me for many others which I must devote to the labours of my profession."

Mrs. Mackenzie and Janet both assured him that they were perfectly satisfied with this promise, and that they would cheerfully wait until he had time to accompany them to those places of amusement which they were desirous of seeing.

"To prevent any unnecessary or troublesome inquiries," said his mother, "I have determined to pass by the name of Cameron among your acquaintance, in case that we should be seen together; Janet, of course, is my daughter."

Edward smiled affectionately on his mother, and, as this arrangement appeared

to him of little consequence, he complied with what he thought the whim of the moment, and reluctantly took leave of her and Miss Cameron, promising to breakfast with them the next morning, as his engagements for the day compelled him to rise early.

Edward was hurrying homeward, when his progress was stopped by Frederic Manningham, who rallied him upon his speed, and, taking his arm, proceeded to inform him that he had heard from lady Elinor, who was in hourly expectation of being informed of the arrival of her parents, but that she did not imagine that they would visit the Castle until they had passed some time in the metropolis.

Frederic talked with all the rapidity of a lover, and Edward felt more than ever inclined to listen to him with patience. He had arranged their correspondence differently from his first proposition, and the letters of lady Elinor came direct to his father's house, under cover to his trusty servant,

servant, so that Frederic lost not an instant in receiving them, the impatience of his nature being such as not to allow him to wait until they could reach his hands by those of Edward.

Frederic, although his whole heart and mind were full of lady Elinor, nevertheless entered warmly into the feelings of his friend, who, in his turn, attempted to describe the impression which Miss Cameron had made upon his senses.—“ I thought how it would be,” cried Frederic, “ as soon as this northern beauty met your gaze. No more chance for lady Jane; she, as well as Olivia Osborne, and fifty more, may all bind their silken locks with willow. Alas, poor girls! how I pity them! lady Jane in particular. Upon my soul, Mackenzie, it is too bad of you, thus to reject the proffered tenderness of such a woman as lady Jane—and for whom? a little northern gipsey, with no other recommendation than a fine dark-blue eye, which your romantic imagination has conceived

to resemble that of your adopted father. Oh, Edward! Edward! here is your old enemy come to light again, in the shape of your *gratitude*. What would my precious sister-in-law say now, if she were told that gratitude had made you fall in love with the blue-eyed Janet Cameron, when you might have run off to Scotland with the rich daughter of the duke of ——?”

“Who told you, my friend, that I was in love with Janet Cameron?”

“Yourself, Mackenzie.”

“You are greatly mistaken, my dear Frederic; I could never assert that I was in love with Miss Cameron, whom I have only seen once, and that for so short a time.”

“I do not want you to assert with your tongue what your eyes and manner instantly betrayed to me. A much shorter time than that which you passed with Miss Cameron was sufficient to rob me of my heart: I no sooner beheld lady Elinor than I felt that I had hitherto only dreamed  
of



of love, but that it was Elinor alone who could realize the passion. Mackenzie, your heart is not less susceptible than mine. But when shall I see Miss Cameron?"

Edward invited him to accompany him the next morning to breakfast with his mother and Janet, to which Frederic willingly assented. The friends now separated, and Edward snatched a moment from the half hour he had to dress, that he might inform Mrs. Mackenzie of her additional visitor. Of his merits, and his tried affection for her son, she was already acquainted; therefore Edward felt perfectly satisfied that his presence would be welcome to his widowed parent and her lovely companion.

CHAPTER V.  
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THE result of Frederic's interview with Miss Cameron was such as Edward had expected. Divested of every ornament which could add to beauty's charms, Janet appeared the next morning before her cousin and his friend; she was scarcely what might be called a brunette, so clear and pure was the texture of her skin; her eyes were of so dark a sapphire, that in some lights they were mistaken for black, and the natural colour of her cheek was the brightest carmine. Her hair, unrestrained by the fashion of the times, curled in wild luxuriance round her face, falling in many a nut-brown ringlet over her neck and bosom, which last was formed by the hand of symmetry. Education had not taught her the artifices of her sex,
and,

and, though well skilled in various accomplishments, Janet possessed the irresistible charm of native innocence of mind and manners, and a feeling heart.

"It is well, Mackenzie," said Frederic, as soon as they were alone, "that I had seen lady Elinor before Janet Cameron — to have been the rival of my friend would have been worse than death; yet I am certain that had my affections been disengaged, they would have involuntarily fixed on Miss Cameron."

"You then think her handsome?" inquired Edward, trying to repress his secret satisfaction.

"Certainly I do," replied Frederic. "But you know that I am singular in my opinions with respect to women; it is something more than mere personal beauty that I look for, and next to Elinor, Miss Cameron appears formed to answer my expectations. I congratulate you, my friend, upon having so sweet a relation. Once, indeed, I should have viewed her

with a jealous eye, for then I looked forward to your being something more to me than even a friend—" Edward changed colour. "But the name of brother would scarcely have increased my regard for you, Mackenzie, and I must now console myself for the disappointment of my early hopes, by believing that Miss Cameron is better calculated to make you happy than my own sister Flora."

"There was also a time," said Edward, colouring deeply, "when I had dared to aspire to the enviable distinction of being beloved by your sister—But Heaven wills every thing for the best. No being can be more sacred to me than Flora, but I own that there is a warmth of feeling and innocent vivacity about Janet Cameron, which better suits my nature than the milder tenderness of Miss Manningham."

"I think as you do, Mackenzie. Flora's dove-like temperament will be more congenial to that of Vivian. The glowing ardour of your romantic spirit, my friend,
calls

calls for a heart as animated, as enthusiastic as your own. I marked the bright blue eyes of Janet Cameron, sweetly mild, chastely tender—this, thought I, is the destined mate of my gallant friend.”

Whatever were the intentions of Edward with respect to Miss Cameron, it is certain that he felt unusual pleasure in the opinions of Frederic respecting her, and that, notwithstanding his numerous engagements, which took up nearly the whole of each day, he contrived to call regularly on his mother, and to escort her and Janet to the theatres. He rose by break of day and went late to bed, yet he enjoyed the finest health, for he was happy, strictly happy, in the performance of all his duties. The principal of his mornings were devoted to the paintings designed for Mr. Colvill, who in general called on him in the course of the day, and whose remarks greatly assisted the labours of Edward. He sometimes breakfasted with his mother, and frequently

called a second time at her lodgings before he fulfilled his engagements for the evening. Thus he was enabled to mingle as usual in the parties of the great, and yet to enjoy the society of Janet, which he would not have resigned for all the allurements of wealth and splendour.

But, while the rose of health bloomed with unabated vigour on the manly cheek of Edward, that of Janet Cameron became paler and paler; even the brilliancy of her eyes seemed to decrease, and tears and sighs assumed the place of smiles and the joyful laugh of playful happiness. Edward was alarmed, and besought his mother to remove a short distance from town, lest the air of London was the cause of Janet's indisposition.

One morning, in particular, Edward was more urgent than usual; but Janet objected to their removal, and Mrs. Mackenzie even affected to treat with carelessness what Edward deemed to be of the highest importance. He even fancied that
that

that he perceived a difference in the behaviour of Miss Cameron towards himself, and that, when he pressed her hand, she looked confused, trembled, and suddenly withdrew it. Mrs. Mackenzie quitted the room, and Edward immediately inquired in what he had offended?

“In nothing,” replied Janet, trying to disengage herself from his hold. “How can you have offended me, cousin Edward, when your conduct has always been that of the kindest brother?”

“Ah, beloved Janet!” cried Edward, “my actions have belied my heart, if they have not betrayed a warmer interest even than brotherly affection.”

Janet turned pale; and Edward, agitated and terrified by her look and manner, supported her trembling frame within his arms, as he entreated, in the tenderest voice, to be made acquainted with the cause of her agitation. At this moment his mother returned; Janet broke from

him, and bursting into an agony of tears, left the room.

Edward, surprised and grieved by her strange behaviour, applied to his mother for an explanation.

“Janet is nervous and low-spirited,” said Mrs. Mackenzie; “she will be better soon; if not, I will take your advice and remove her into the country.”

“Perhaps, mother, Miss Cameron has left a friend behind, whose loss may make her lament her absence from Scotland.”

“Janet has many friends in Scotland,” said Mrs. Mackenzie, “but I suppose, my dear son, that for friend, I may substitute the word lover. What if I should say that Janet’s heart is already bestowed upon some Scottish youth?”

“Then, mother, I am wretched!” exclaimed Edward, in a tone of deep affliction, at the same time rising and taking his hat.

“Stay, my dear Edward,” said his mother,
ther,

ther, gently detaining him; “stay and compose yourself; Janet has left no one behind whose happiness is so dear to her as yours.—Are you satisfied?”

Edward hugged his mother in an ecstasy of joy, yet he entreated her to lose no time in removing his beloved Janet from London. The distance, however, must not be great, as he could not exist if he did not see her daily.

“About ten miles?” answered Mrs. Mackenzie, looking archly at her son; then adding—“There will be no occasion for our removal, my son: if I but speak *five* words to Janet, her indisposition will vanish, her colour and her spirits will return, and those *five* words will do more for her than change of air, or all the doctors in the world.”

“Heavens! my mother, and do you possess the power of removing the secret uneasiness of Janet, and yet hesitate to do it? What can be those *five* words on which the peace of my dear cousin depends?”

pend's ? and what can be your motive, dear mother, in delaying to give them utterance, since they will restore the health and happiness of your niece ?”

“ Edward,” said Mrs. Mackenzie, gravely, “ I am not to be hurried into the performance of anything rashly, merely to gratify the wayward humours of your cousin. The happiness of Janet is far dearer to me than my own—of this she ought to be convinced; but she *doubts* what I wish her to *believe*. Do not, however, be alarmed, my dear Edward; both you and Janet must have patience; you must teach her the necessity of forbearance and self-denial, and assure her that if I seem to trifle with her happiness, it is only to render it more secure.”

Edward could not comprehend his mother's meaning. He felt inclined, nevertheless, to rely upon the goodness of her intentions both towards himself and his cousin, although the manner in which she displayed that goodness was as mysterious

as

as most of her conduct. Again he besought her not to neglect the indisposition of Miss Cameron, and again she replied that Janet had no cause for uneasiness, if she placed a proper confidence in her.

Edward, who had outstaid his usual time, was now compelled to hurry back to his lodgings, where, as he expected, he found Mr. Colvill. He apologized for his absence as well as the confusion of his ideas would permit. Mr. Colvill looked at him, and languidly smiled, as he stretched out his hand towards him. The countenance and manner of Mr. Colvill soon banished from the mind of Edward his own personal vexations; and, as he raised the hand of Mr. Colvill to his lips with respectful affection, he inquired if he had been long indisposed?

“Not long, my dear boy,” and his eyes glanced across the table, on which lay a newspaper—“not long: I am subject to these nervous attacks; my constitution is

so completely shattered, that any sudden surprise, either of pleasure or pain, reduces me to the comparative weakness of a child."

"May I hope that the present is at least one of pleasure, my dear sir?" said Edward warmly.

Mr. Colvill shook his head, and deeply sighed—"My hours of pleasure have been few indeed—so few, that I can easily number them, while those which I have passed in pain and sickness are as innumerable as the stars in the firmament. And yet, Edward, I was once like you—buoyant of spirits, light of heart, and disposed to view every thing around me with the glance of blissful, self-satisfied happiness. Oh, how joyous were my days, how peaceful were my nights, until love disturbed their tranquillity! Edward, if you value the repose of your soul, trust not to woman's smiles—place not your happiness in woman's keeping—shun the lip of
beauty

beauty as the touch of infection—fly the magic circle of a woman's arms, for within them lie ruin, distraction, and remorse.”

He sunk upon the bosom of Edward, who involuntarily pressed him to his heart. Mr. Colvill started back, and, gazing intently on the countenance of Edward, said—“What means this strange, this undefinable affection, which fills my soul, and which, in spite of myself, in spite of memory, that would warn me not to trust an eye like yours, still binds me closer and closer to your interest? Young man, if you should deceive me, if you should be the second instance that the fairest face of nature can conceal a devil's heart, how great will be the sin for which you will one day have to answer! But no—I will not doubt you, dearest Mackenzie—I will confide in these tears of genuine sympathy—I will once more trust in a beautiful exterior, nor fear lest treachery and dissimulation should be my reward.”

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“The weakness of human nature may lead me into error, sir,” said Edward, modestly, “but I know that I can never be treacherous or hypocritical. I love and revere you, sir, with filial affection; but GRATITUDE alone would make me study to be worthy of your kindness and liberality.”

“As yet you know them only by name,” replied Mr. Colvill, recovering himself, but still leaning on Edward for support. “Though destined by fate never to know the rapture of a father’s name, yet I have the power of adopting, as well as of bestowing my fortune upon whom I please. In the bitterness of recollected anguish, I counselled you, my dear boy, to shun the seductions of a woman’s siren smile; yet how could my heart, which at this moment throbs with quicker motion at the remembrance of an angel’s form, give sanction to so cold a caution!

‘Who that would ask a heart to dulness wed,

‘The waveless calm, the slumber of the dead?’

‘No,

' No, the wild bliss of nature needs alloy,
' And fear and sorrow fan the fire of joy!
' And say, without our hopes, without our fears,
' Without the home that plighted love endears,
' Without the smile from partial beauty won,
' Oh ! what were man ?—A world without a sun.'

"Edward," continued Mr. Colvill, "are your affections already engaged? Think that it is a friend, a father that asks the question, and deal sincerely with me."

The sudden glow which flushed the cheek of Edward was noticed by the penetrating eye of Mr. Colvill.—"My dear boy," said he, pressing his hand affectionately, "the blushes of ingenuous youth betray the secret of your heart. One question more—am I acquainted with the object of your passion?"

Edward, in great confusion, replied in the negative.

"My hopes then are vain," said Mr. Colvill, "but my intentions remain the same. You have disappointed me, Edward, but the fault is not yours."

Mr.

Mr. Colvill now rose, saying that he would no longer intrude upon his time. His eye again rested on the paper which remained on the table—"My life has been a series of disappointments," said Mr. Colvill, "and yet, would you believe it, I am weak enough to be overcome, as you have witnessed this morning, by the mere sight of a name among the arrivals in London, a name which ought to excite in my bosom only one sentiment, and that is indignation. When shall I see you, Edward—can you call on me this evening?"

Edward, recollecting that he had a leisure hour, promised to pass it with Mr. Colvill, who now took leave, and Edward, with an eagerness bordering on weakness, caught up the paper, while his eye glanced over the list of fashionable arrivals. Among them was that of the marquis and marchioness of Anendale. Edward read no further, but ringing hastily for Oliver, he ordered him to execute some trifling commissions, and then proceeded to

to the house of the marquis, that he might be one of the first to welcome their return to England.

The same tremors as before now agitated the frame of Edward, as he beheld the form and heard the voice of the beautiful marchioness. He sprang forward to press her extended hand: his look, his manner struck the marchioness, but recollecting herself, she with inimitable grace and sweetness expressed the satisfaction which she felt at the compliment thus paid to her by the early visit of Edward. She made room for him on the couch on which she reclined, inquired with seeming interest into all that had passed during her absence from England; then, suddenly reverting to the loss she had sustained by the death of her darling son, she exclaimed, with an accent and a look that pierced the soul of Edward—"None but a mother, Mr. Mackenzie, can judge of a mother's agonies when deprived of such a promising child as mine; he was all the world

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to me—he was the idol of my existence, the joy of my life. Where, oh where shall I find another object on whom I could lavish all the hoarded tenderness of my bursting heart? Where shall I meet with one capable of loving me with the doting fondness of my poor boy?”

Tears filled the eyes of the marchioness, and she leaned gently against the trembling form of Edward, whose countenance but too well betrayed to the lovely adept in dissimulation the workings of his mind.

“My boy loved you, Mr. Mackenzie,” continued the marchioness, “and in his last moments you were remembered with a kindness which made an indelible impression on my heart. You are young; perhaps you have no mother, no father, to claim your filial duties, to divide your affection—perhaps you have both time and inclination to fulfil the wishes of my child, and to supply to me the place of my lost, my idolized son.”

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This was a request which totally unnerved the pliant soul of Edward, already melted to a woman's weakness. He flung himself on one knee before the marchioness—he pressed her fair hands to his lips with passionate energy, as he exclaimed, in a tremulous voice, that he was at perfect liberty to devote his life to her service.

The marchioness gazed on him for a moment with scrutinizing attention.—“Rise, Mackenzie,” said she, in a low voice, “rise, and be assured that I accept with gratitude the offer of your filial tenderness. I shall expect to see you, unless you are particularly engaged, at all my public parties, and to attend me as often as you can in my different engagements. Can you promise, Mackenzie, to give up to me so much of your time as what I have now required?”

“Command every hour of my existence,” cried Edward, with all the ardour of his romantic character, “and I shall think

think life too short if passed in your presence, and if permitted to contribute to your felicity."

"Hold, Mackenzie," exclaimed her ladyship, with sudden gravity; "I enlist you under my banners, and accept of your services, not as a lover, but as a friend, a companion, a confidant—in fact, as a son."

"Pardon me, I beseech you," said Edward, in painful confusion, "if in the warmth of my feelings I have given utterance to any expression which could give your ladyship offence, or admit of so presumptuous, so bold a construction. The love which filled my bosom from the first hour in which I beheld your ladyship—"

"Hush!" replied the marchioness, placing her hand on his lips—"No explanations, Mackenzie, they are dangerous things. Love me as much and as tenderly as you please, but let discretion guide your actions. To-morrow week I begin my public nights by a masked ball; let me see you early—but I shall have an opportunity
before

before then to learn from you the character you will assume. You must dine with me to-morrow, and in the evening accompany me to the theatre ; and if your friend, sir Joseph Rennie, is disengaged, bring him with you, as he is one of those beings of whom I entertain a high opinion."

The entrance of some female visitors put an end to the discourse of the marchioness; and Edward soon after took leave, that he might call on sir Joseph, and make him acquainted with the invitation of her ladyship. Sir Joseph was luckily at home, and free from any particular engagement ; he therefore promised to stop at Edward's lodgings the next day, and to convey him in his chariot to the house of the marchioness.

The mind of Edward was not sufficiently collected to admit of his returning to the study of his art ; he therefore resolved to devote the remainder of the day to his mother and Janet, and he accordingly proceeded on his way to their abode. Mrs.

Mackenzie seemed pleased by his unexpected presence, but Janet coloured confusedly, and soon made an excuse to leave the room. Edward repeated to his mother how he had passed his time since he had quitted her in the morning, as well as his engagement for the next day.

Mrs. Mackenzie inquired at which house the marchioness had a box.—“ I have just consented,” said she, “ to go with Mary and her intended husband to the play to-morrow evening, and, as they have left the choice of the house to me, I should like above all things to take advantage of the present opportunity of seeing once again the lady whom I loved, and whom I have so faithfully served.”

Edward saw no impropriety in this innocent wish of his mother being gratified. It was extremely natural that she should long to behold the liberal and affectionate patroness of her youth ; and in so crowded a place as the theatre, it was not likely that she should be observed by the marchioness.

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He therefore acquainted her with the exact situation of lady Anendale's box, as it had been pointed out to him by sir Joseph Rennie. Edward once more remarked to his mother the paleness of Janet's cheek, and the languor of her appearance.

"Fear not," said Mrs. Mackenzie; "I have spoken to her, and she has promised to be all that I could wish. It is to amuse her mind that I consented to go to the play. Can you sup with us, my dear Edward?"

Edward thought that he should not be able to quit the marchioness in time to join his mother; "but," said he, "you shall see me as usual at the breakfast hour."

"Be on your guard, I conjure you," exclaimed Mrs. Mackenzie, with earnestness, "and do not suffer yourself to be surprised into a disclosure of any thing which concerns yourself or me. Remember that I am a Mrs. Cameron, and that, if pressed on the subject, you must say that your mother lives in Scotland."

“Trust me,” replied Edward, “that I shall most cautiously avoid the mention of every thing that concerns myself or my family. I have an utter aversion to all kinds of deception, and hate falsehoods too much to resort to them willingly.”

“I have an equal aversion to them as yourself,” said Mrs. Mackenzie; “but it has been my singular fate, ever since I left the castle of lady Fitz-Arthur, to have my words and actions governed by the vow I then made.”

Miss Cameron now entered, and Edward forgot the question which hovered on his lips, although it was of the utmost importance to his peace. Janet was, he thought, less shy than usual, and the heart of Edward expanded with love and hope; yet, amidst his own joyous feelings, he forgot not his appointment with Mr. Collivill; taking, therefore, an affectionate leave of his mother and Janet, he hastened to the house of lady James Osborne.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VI.
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EDWARD found Mr. Colvill alone, and so deeply engaged in gazing on something which he held in his hand, and which Edward perceived to be a lock of hair, that he noticed not his entrance until he was close by his side.

“ Ah, my dear boy!” exclaimed Mr. Colvill, with a melancholy smile, “ is it you? Welcome! welcome! You find me employed in looking over papers which I have never yet had courage to destroy, though they contain the promises of a broken faith. Look, Mackenzie, on this soft glossy ringlet—it was the first pledge of a faithless passion. Its beauty is undiminished by time—so is my affection. These papers, which I have weakly retained in my possession, and which I this evening

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ing took out of my cabinet with the intention of consigning them to the flames, have so completely unnerved me, that I feel incapable of fixing my attention to any other subject. If, therefore, you will listen to the origin of my secret uneasiness, I will confide to you, Mackenzie, the story of my fatal attachment ; it may prove a salutary warning to you, my dear boy, not to allow the exuberance of your feelings to overcome your reason, prudence, and discretion. If, in the candid exposure of my early frailties, you should feel inclined to condemn my rashness, remember, my dear Mackenzie, that I loved with a passion which has withstood the attacks of infidelity, barbarity, and wanton ingratitude."

Edward raised the hand of Mr. Colvill to his lips, with an expression of tenderness that seemed to console the heart of the former, who, after carefully returning the silken lock to its place of concealment, thus began :—

“ When

“ When I was a very young man, younger even than yourself, I became acquainted, in rather a singular way, with one of the loveliest creatures in the world. Being on a visit to a relation, during one of my college-vacations, and having naturally a talent for drawing, I was busily engaged one morning in sketching some beautiful scenery, belonging to a fine old seat in the neighbourhood of my uncle. While thus employed, I was suddenly surprised by the appearance of a young lady, whose perfect symmetry of form, and perfect beauty of countenance, exceeded even my sanguine imagination. She approached towards me, and, in a voice of musical sweetness, begged permission to overlook the drawing, which I had nearly finished. The request, coming from one so young, and so dazzlingly beautiful, was instantly complied with. She praised my performance, and would have directed my attention to another view still more picturesque, could I have seen any

G 4

thing

thing but herself. We laughed and chatted with the ease of long acquaintance. I told her who I was, and she also communicated to me her name and family. It gave a momentary chill to my happiness, but another glance from her dark brilliant eye made me forget every obstacle which my sober judgment told me would be raised to prevent our intimacy. We parted only to renew our interview the following morning. Reason and duty urged me to shun a connexion, clandestine, imprudent, and without the sanction of our mutual friends; but love and Gertrude's eyes overcame my scruples. I pledged to her my first vows of fidelity and truth, and received in return a lock of her hair, and a kiss which would have fixed for ever a less constant heart than mine.

“ The heaviest misfortune which I *then* knew was our necessary separation. I was compelled to return to college; but, through the means of a faithful domestic,

we

we contrived to carry on a regular correspondence with each other. Again I was permitted to spend my vacation at my uncle's, and again our delicious interviews commenced. Circumstances now enabled us to meet with less fear of a discovery, and I frequently enjoyed the luxury of her society in the privacy of her own apartments. At that time I was not nineteen, and Gertrude was barely sixteen. The freedom of her manners, which I then attributed to the artless inexperience of her mind, gave me but too many opportunities to plead with ardour my passion, and to hear from lips like hers the dangerous confession of a mutual tenderness. At sounds like these I would catch her passionately to my breast, and clasp her unreluctant, yielding, graceful form within my arms. The voluptuous tenderness of her exquisite eye betrayed the melting softness of her soul, and the warm crimson of her cheek heightened the irresistible allurements of her appearance.

“ Honour, however, guided my actions, notwithstanding the dangerous temptations by which I was surrounded, until one fatal evening, when half an hour of bliss, the most perfect that ever fell to a mortal's lot, was the forerunner of years of misery, regret, and despondency.

“ It was our general practice to meet regularly, at a stated hour; but this I was prevented from doing one evening by some company having arrived at my uncle's, which made my presence indispensable until near midnight. The moment I was at liberty I flew to the residence of my beloved Gertrude. The lateness of the hour prevented my gaining admittance as usual; I therefore recollected that, by means of a boat, I could row myself close under the window of her chamber, which I instantly performed. My beautiful Gertrude had not retired to rest, and the dashing of the oars called her to notice what was passing. She saw me, and, by a movement of her hand, encouraged me to attempt

tempt a new ascent to her apartments. A long flight of stone steps conducted me to her arms, and the melting kiss which I received as my reward seemed the sweetest I had ever tasted. We were alone, for her attendants had long retired to their chambers—we were alone, and Gertrude was more beautiful and more tender than usual. We talked of our approaching nuptials; we repeated the oft-repeated plan of her elopement, and sealed our bond of faith and love upon each others' lips. Unheeded flew the hours, for who in my situation, elevated by wine, and intoxicated by love, ever counted the passing moments when in the presence of an adored being? The silence of the night, the solitude of the place, the exquisite loveliness of Gertrude, but, more than all, the dangerous softness of her manners, made me forget the self-command which I had hitherto kept over myself, and Gertrude became mine, as I then fondly hoped, for ever. My reflections of the morning were by

no means enviable. I accused myself of having abused the confidence of the woman I adored, and I hastened to make the only reparation in my power, by marrying her immediately. I felt surprised, though not displeased, to find that the confidence of Gertrude was not diminished by my rashness. It was of consequence to my future establishment that our nuptials should be concealed from the knowledge of my uncle, who had declared his intention of providing for me in a manner as bountiful as was his affection, and I felt convinced that the choice which I had thus clandestinely made would never meet with his sanction; yet I felt myself bound by an imperious sense of duty, after what had passed between us, to urge the solemnization of our marriage, which I expected would meet with the immediate consent of Gertrude. She listened to me with mute attention, until I had finished my entreaties, and then, with a look and gesture which thrilled through my frame, she



she replied, that she considered herself as strictly mine as if we had been legally married, and that, for the sake of our future comforts, she deemed it advisable to delay for a time the union which I so warmly urged.

“ This fresh proof, as I then considered it, of Gertrude's confidence in my love, only endeared her the more to my too credulous heart. Our dangerous, but delicious interviews were continued; and if ever man idolized a woman beyond all earthly love, that man was myself, that woman was Gertrude.

“ The fervour of my affection knew of no abatement, my happiness of no alloy, until I imagined that I perceived a change in the conduct of Gertrude. She began to express her fears lest some one should discover our stolen meetings, and betray them to the friend under whose care she was placed, and to whom she looked up for a noble independence. This fear only made me the more anxious to hasten our union,

union, and I again entreated her to become legally mine ; again she resisted my persuasion, but in a manner that awakened in my mind the distracting conviction that Gertrude was indifferent upon a subject on which all my hopes of earthly happiness depended.

“ At this critical juncture, my uncle, who, unknown to me, had been informed of my attachment to Gertrude, desired me to attend him to London, where I was to meet my father and family, preparatory to my receiving an appointment as secretary to a nobleman of high rank who was going over to India. This intelligence seemed the knell of my departed happiness. I hastened to the beloved idol of my soul ; I even wept at her feet, as I implored her to become my wife, and to accompany me to India.

“ Gertrude received this unexpected news with a composure that annihilated every hope. She counselled me to obey my uncle, and to accompany him to London ;  
and,

and, as my departure from England would not take place immediately, I should be able to see her again in a short time, when our nuptials could be solemnized. Oh, my foreboding heart! how plainly did it then tell me that our parting was an eternal one! I clasped the beautiful inconstant to my beating bosom—I pressed my lips to hers, in an agony of woe! ‘Oh, Gertrude!’ I exclaimed, ‘in the eyes of Heaven you are mine, and mine only. Remember, that to me were pledged your virgin vows, and that if you falsify your oath of fidelity and truth, you will doom me to eternal wretchedness—you will break a heart that loves you with no common passion, and that will ever remain constant to its first affection, though destined to become the object of your cruel indifference, your strange and singular neglect.’

“The seducing blandishments of Gertrude lulled for a time my distracted mind; yet I was no sooner alone, than all my fears

fears were awakened, all my suspicions confirmed, as my confused thoughts ran wildly over the circumstances of our recent interviews. My agitation was too visible to escape the notice of my uncle; but he was silent as to the *cause*, and kindly redoubled his affectionate attentions, in order to amuse and divert me. In London I met all the members of my family, and among them my favourite sister, now lady James Osborne. I was also introduced to the nobleman to whom I was appointed secretary, and from him I learned that our departure would be immediately. This information was followed by a letter from Gertrude, which nearly deprived me of life, and for a time entirely of reason. My situation alarmed my family; my secret was known to them; my uncle was no longer silent; and, as soon as I could listen to any other voice beside that of my favourite Maria, I learned from him his knowledge of my unfortunate attachment, and his anxiety to separate

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rate me from an object every way unworthy of a passion like mine.

“ Pressed to the bosom of my loved Maria, and, supported in her arms, I at length gained courage to read over the faithless confession of my perjured mistress. Her sentiments were changed ; her heart was altered—so were her wishes ; and she therefore made it a point of conscience to refuse her hand unless her affections could accompany it.

“ Deeply as she had plunged the poisoned arrow into my breast, I had still sufficient command over my tortured feelings to conceal from my sister and my family the *extent* of our fatal intimacy. Not a word, not even a hint, fell from my parched lips, which could cast a stain upon the *purity* of her conduct.

“ My uncle, who was but too well acquainted with the dark shades in her character, rejoiced at my having escaped what he considered as eternal misery, and felt no surprise at the inconstancy of Gertrude,

trude, whom he hesitated not to pronounce to be one who was incapable of feeling a pure and permanent affection ; but I, who knew the excess of our tenderness for each other, could scarcely credit that a woman, who had given such strong proofs of confidence and love, could be the first to break asunder those tender and delicious ties by which our souls had been united.

“ More dead than alive, I embarked for India, having first given vent to my injured tenderness in a long letter, which I addressed to Gertrude, and enclosed to a faithful domestic in our confidence. Time, which I vainly hoped would banish from my mind the image of a faithless woman, seems only to have given a temporary oblivion to my woes.

“ After an absence of nearly nineteen years, I have returned to my native country, rich in wealth, but a bankrupt in happiness. A stranger to the endearing names of husband and of father, I wander through life the ghost of former times, the shade  
of

of former years ; I feel myself alone in a crowded city—a mere blank in the universe—a creature that, when it ceases to exist, will leave no trace behind, no being to perpetuate his name, or to inherit his fortune. And who made me this miserable thing ? who blighted the first buds of youthful delight, and poisoned the sweet source of early happiness, early confidence ? who but woman ?”

Mr. Colvill paused ; his voice became inarticulate, and his eyes were humid with tears ; nor was Edward less agitated, as he pressed within his own the hand of his injured friend. At length Mr. Colvill resumed his discourse.—“ Such has been my fate, my dear Edward. Disappointed in my first expectation of affection and conjugal felicity, I could not bear to listen to any proposal of a second attachment. The functions of my heart were withered ; it wanted power and spring to beat with another passion. The bitterness of blighted

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ed love, the keenness of extinguished hope, had closed every avenue which before was open to the sweetest, the most delicious feelings of a favoured lover. She whom I had so fondly idolized had abandoned me for ever, and my weak and sensitive heart shrunk back with fear and disgust from the intrusion of a second idol. My return to England has not, however, been without its consolation and its pleasures. My reunion with my favourite sister has afforded me the highest gratification which now I am capable of feeling; for, independent of my affection for her, it has been the means of introducing to my knowledge a young man who has singularly interested both my sister and myself in his favour."

Mr. Colvill pressed the hand of Edward as he spoke. A gentle tap at the chamber door interrupted their conversation. It was lady James, who, unconscious of Edward's visit, had come to spend  
an



an hour with the brother whom she so dearly loved, before she accompanied her family to an evening party.

The sight of her favourite Edward agreeably surprised her ladyship, who inquired if he was disengaged for the next evening, as in that case she would request him to accompany her and her daughters to the theatre.

Edward confessed his prior engagement, and remarked that, had he not already promised to attend the marchioness of Anendale, he should have been happy to have devoted himself to the service of lady James.

The countenance of her ladyship underwent an immediate change, while that of her brother became deathly pale.—“To which house are you going, Mr. Mackenzie?” said lady James, in a hurried tone; and, upon learning that it was to Covent-Garden—“Thank God!” she exclaimed, “I shall not then be compelled  
to

to breathe the same atmosphere as the marchioness of Anendale."

Edward both looked and felt surprised at what he heard; he however did not venture to make any comment, but withdrew, greatly astonished that any human being could feel a repugnance to that which he considered as one of the sweetest enjoyments of his life.

## CHAPTER VII.

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THE next day Mr. Colvill called upon Edward.—“Our conversation terminated rather abruptly last night,” said he, “owing to the entrance of my sister. After what then passed between us, my dear Edward, you will not require any further testimony of my regard, since I entrusted you with *more* than ever met the ear of my beloved Maria.”

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“The confidence with which you have honoured me, sir,” replied Edward, “I shall ever hold sacred——”

“I feel that you will,” said Mr. Colvill. “All that I request of you is, that you will look upon me as one who feels for you the affection and interest of a father; and with these feelings towards you, my dear Mackenzie, you will not, I hope, deem as impertinent any question which I may ask, that is connected with your welfare and happiness.”

Edward assured Mr. Colvill that, on the contrary, he should consider any investigation of his conduct as the highest mark of friendship, as he was too young and too inexperienced to judge in many respects for himself.

“It is this very feeling which brought me here this morning,” replied Mr. Colvill. “You are young and an orphan, at least so I have been led to understand; nature has been liberal towards you, in every gift which can render you an object  
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of esteem, admiration, and envy. Your talents have gained you the friendship and the patronage of those whose rank alone entitles them to be styled your superiors ; and your personal graces have done more—they have obtained for you the notice of the loveliest woman in England. But beware, Edward, how you indulge in the dangerous charm of her society. You heard what fell involuntarily last night from the lips of lady James—I say involuntarily, for she is not a being to speak ill of any person ; of this, however, rest firmly assured, that she had just grounds for wishing to avoid the sight of the marchioness of Anendale, and, if possible, of that of her friends—you excepted.”

“ Good Heaven ! ” exclaimed Edward, “ how singular it is, that every one whom I love and revere should, as if by consent, have formed the same opinion, while I—I alone am blind to her failings ! Oh, sir, if you have not yet seen the marchioness,  
I am

I am sure that you will join with me in thinking her the most perfect of God's creatures; you will think as I do, that no latent evil can lurk within so sweet a form—that she whose look, whose smile, whose voice, remind us of heaven, can never be a being composed of all the grosser particles of our nature——”

This rhapsody of our young artist was interrupted by the deep and heavy sigh of Mr. Colvill. He was pale and trembling, yet he tried to compose himself, lest he should alarm his companion—“No, Edward,” said he, “I shall not think as you do. At your age I was equally warm, equally enthusiastic, but experience has too fatally convinced me that an angel's form *may* conceal a devil's heart.”

Edward gave a sudden start at these well-remembered words.—“What ails you, my dear boy? can you wonder that I am thus ready in believing ill of the marchioness, after the disappointment which I received in my first attachment, and after

what fell last night from the lips of my sister? Ah, my young friend, be warned by my example, and think, when your eye dwells with rapture on a beautiful form or exquisite features—when your ear receives entranced the tones of a soft and silvery voice—oh, think of *me!* think of the hours, days, years of misery which I have endured, and be convinced that it is possible, too possible that an angel's form may enshrine a devil's heart!"

Again Edward gave an involuntary start.

"I do not wonder that you should be thus startled at the idea of human depravity," said Mr. Colvill; "and it is with reluctance that I have constrained myself to teach you the sad but necessary lesson of guarding yourself against the fatal influence of female beauty, when unaccompanied by the virtues of the mind and heart. My sister, on whose veracity I can rely, assures me that the house of lady Anendale is but a scene of varied temptation for a young man like yourself. She loves

loves you sincerely, Edward, and trembles for the consequence of so dangerous a connexion. Has your intimacy been of long standing?"

Edward, who saw no just grounds for concealment, briefly recapitulated to Mr. Colvill the origin of his first acquaintance with the marchioness, concealing only the attachment which subsisted between lady Elinor and Frederic Manningham. Mr. Colvill listened with the deep attention of one who felt highly interested in the subject. His countenance, during the narration, underwent several changes; and when Edward had finished, he attempted to force a smile, but it was so evidently forced, that it only gave pain to his observer.

"I can but too well enter into your feelings, my dear Mackenzie," said Mr. Colvill, "and am ready to allow you every merit for the romantic generosity which led you to undertake so long a journey, that you might perform your promise ;

but did no selfish motive increase the pleasure of the act? no lurking passion for the lovely lady Elinor?"

"No, on my honour!" replied Edward, hastily; "I had not even beheld the picture of her ladyship."

"But you had seen that of her mother, and might have expected to find the daughter equally attractive."

"No such motive, or even wish, influenced my conduct, I assure you," said Edward; "but having once seen lady Elinor, I confess that I feel for her the kindness of a brother, and shall ever take a lively interest in her welfare."

Again Mr. Colvill sighed.—"My dear boy," said he, "you have confessed that your affections are engaged—surely the famed beauty of the marchioness has not enslaved your heart——"

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Edward, with a sort of half shudder; "Heaven forbid that I should ever become so criminal as to fall in love with a married woman!"



woman! for, if there is one crime more deep and deadly than another, it is that of estranging the mind and heart of a wife from her husband and her family. No, my dear sir, although I cannot analyze my tenderness for the marchioness, though I cannot define the nature of my feelings when in her presence, yet this I know, that it is mixed with a veneration, a respect, that forbids every unhallowed sentiment, which the beauty of her person and the voluptuousness of her manners might otherwise excite."

"Well, my dear boy, we will not attempt to analyze a passion so truly platonic as yours. But be advised, Edward, by one who is disinterestedly and warmly your friend: shun the society of the marchioness of Anendale, if you value your own happiness, and the opinion of the world. In a short time you will be in her company——"

Mr. Colvill now suddenly rose, and looking at his watch, abruptly took leave

of Edward, who, notwithstanding what had passed, felt rejoiced to see the carriage of sir Joseph Rennie stop at the door, and hastened to join him, with a smile of delight, which was heightened by the recollection of the fair being to whom they were now rapidly proceeding.

The marchioness had a party to dinner, among whom were several very elegant young men, who were evidently the captives of her beauty, and to whose flattery she listened with gratified attention; but Edward no sooner appeared, than the marchioness exultingly introduced him to her admirers, and, by placing him next herself, gave them to understand that, while he was present, they must be contented to receive only the occasional marks of her favour. Any other man but Edward, thus situated, and thus surrounded, would have created a host of enemies; but his youth, his engaging affability, his winning sweetness of address, and gentlemanly deportment, softened down the sting of rivalry;

rivalship; they envied him the smiles of the marchioness, but they could not hate him for receiving them.

At the theatre the marchioness became again the object of general attention. Her absence from England, which seemed to have improved the natural loveliness of her person, had also made her a novelty in the fashionable world, and her re-appearance among its votaries was hailed by the universal gaze of public admiration. The marchioness was now in her thirty-fifth year, but so exquisite was the bloom of her cheek, so brilliant the lustre of her eyes, and so finely proportioned was her figure, that the most critical observer would have pronounced her to be under thirty. The moment she entered her box, all eyes were turned upon her, and upon Edward, who had the distinguished honour of conducting her to her seat, and who by the desire of his beautiful companion placed himself by her side. He cast a hasty glance over the humbler inmates

of the pit, and soon recognized among them his mother and his beloved Janet, with the modest Mary Mackenzie and her destined husband. The contrast between their situation and his own brought the blush of pride into his face; he feared to notice either his mother or Janet, lest the marchioness should perceive them; but the language of his eyes was sufficiently tender to satisfy the minds of those he loved.

At the end of the comedy, Mrs. Mackenzie, who had cast several stolen glances towards the box which contained the marchioness, stood up to take a nearer survey of the lady whom she had so faithfully loved when a girl; her attention was divided between the maturer beauties of the marchioness and the youthful charms of Edward, who, glowing with health and animated by a variety of sanguine hopes, seemed born to fill the station in which his good fortune had placed him. Nor was the heart of Mrs. Mackenzie less sanguinely

guinely elated, though from different motives, than that of her son. She gazed on him with pride and exultation; then turned towards Miss Cameron with similar feelings, and thought that Heaven had formed them for each other.

The eyes of lady Anendale, as they roved from object to object, soon caught a glimpse of the well-known features of her once favourite Alice. For a moment her cheek grew pale, then crimsoned with the finest vermilion, as she laid her hand on the arm of Edward, and, pointing out to his notice her former confidant and friend, whispering told him that she would now put his professions of service to the test, and requested that he would watch the movements of Alice when she left the theatre, and tell her to call the next morning at Anendale house.

“ I shall depend on your vigilance, Mackenzie,” said she, “ for it is of consequence to my peace that I should not miss

the present opportunity of knowing where that person is to be found."

Had the marchioness been less agitated herself, she could not have failed to perceive the embarrassment of Edward at this request; he nevertheless complied with seeming alacrity, and joined his mother at the close of the play, who at first appeared disconcerted by the message of the marchioness, but, recovering herself quickly, she said — "Tell her ladyship that I shall cheerfully obey her commands; and remember, dear Edward, that not a word escapes your lips that can lead the marchioness to suppose any intimacy subsists between us."

Edward had only time to press the hand of his beloved Janet, and to assure his mother that he would strictly attend to her injunctions; as he knew that the marchioness was waiting his return, and lest any unnecessary delay should excite her suspicions, he hurried back to the box, just as her ladyship was on the point of quitting

ting it. A smile of pleasure irradiated her features on his approach, but it was evident to the perception of Edward that she laboured to conceal some mental agitation, which he concluded was occasioned by the unexpected appearance of his mother.

He was right; the marchioness was both surprised and pained by the sight of Alice, for it brought to her recollection the occurrences of her early life, and awakened in her bosom a train of emotions, which had lain dormant for years. Though an admirable dissembler, yet she now found extreme difficulty in smothering her newly-revived fears, and of wearing as usual the semblance of a mind at ease. She eagerly inquired of Edward if he had succeeded in speaking to the person whom she had pointed out to his notice? and upon his repeating to her the promise of his mother, that she would call early the next morning, the marchioness

recovered in some degree her habitual air of careless and happy indifference.

Nor was Mrs. Mackenzie more tranquil than the marchioness. She had indulged herself in gazing on the lovely countenance of her to whose partiality she was indebted for an education far above her birth, of her whom she had loved with grateful tenderness, and for whose welfare she had been more solicitous than for her own; she was now called on to re-appear before her, after the lapse of several years, and would be expected to give an account of her past life since their separation. This was no easy task to perform, as Mrs. Mackenzie felt the necessity of concealing from the knowledge of lady Anendale her real name and some other circumstances, lest she should discover who Edward was, and thus, in spite of all her caution, he would become the victim of her resentment.

The marchioness had ordered breakfast  
to



to be served in her private *boudoir*, to which no visitor was to be admitted that morning but Mrs. Mackenzie and Edward. At length the impatience of her ladyship was gratified, and Alice, pale and trembling, appeared before her—not the rosy, plump, laughing girl, as when last she saw her at the castle of Fitz-Arthur, for sorrow and sickness had blighted the rose upon the cheek of Alice, and quenched the lustre of her once-sparkling black eyes, while time had only improved the glowing beauties of the marchioness. Alice, though altered in person, was the same in manners. She advanced respectfully towards lady Anendale, and pressed her hand affectionately to her lips, while the marchioness, throwing herself on the neck of Alice, kissed her tenderly, as she assured her that she had always regretted their separation.

“But tell me, dear Alice,” said she, with a look and voice of the most encouraging

couraging kindness—"tell me, Alice, all that has happened to you since you left me. Have you been happy?"

"But for *one* circumstance, I should have been completely happy," replied Alice, with a sigh which she breathed to the remembrance of her beloved husband: "but that *one* circumstance——"

"I know to what you allude," hastily exclaimed the marchioness, looking anxiously round the room, with a glance which Alice understood; "and, as you may suppose, it has also occasioned *me* many an unhappy moment. But you have, no doubt, kept your promise inviolable?"

"I trust that I have discharged my duty faithfully," replied Mrs. Mackenzie.

"I believe you, my dear Alice. Another time, and in another place, you shall inform me of all that I wish to know. Did you take notice of the gentleman whom I sent to speak to you last night?"

"My surprise and pleasure at being recognized

cognized by your ladyship overcame me for a few minutes; but I remember that he was young and handsome."

"Did he not strike you as resembling some one whom you had formerly seen?" inquired the marchioness, with earnestness.

"Not at *that* moment," said Alice, confusedly.

"Well, we shall have a better opportunity than the present," continued lady Anendale, "of renewing our confidence. I have often thought of you, Alice, and often wished to have you about my person, because I felt assured that I could trust you with the dearest secrets of my soul. Tell me, as briefly as you can, what has happened to you since you left me."

Mrs. Mackenzie, who stated that her name was Cameron, now recapitulated to the attentive marchioness all that was requisite to satisfy her curiosity, assuring her that she was just as ready to devote herself

herself to her service as in the days of her girlhood.

“ I have ever regretted parting with you,” said her ladyship; “ but you know, Alice, that it was impossible to do otherwise. I believe that you have served me faithfully, and that, in short, you are the only being in the world who ever loved me with a real, a disinterested affection.”

“ Oh, say not so, my lady, say not so! Dearly as I have loved you, what is my humble attachment when compared to that of him who adored you in your early years? Ah, my lady, if you had but listened to——”

“ Silence, Alice!” cried the marchioness; “ that is a subject on which you must never touch: my hatred is as deeply rooted as ever. But I have your interest and welfare at heart, although I perceive that time has not diminished your foolish partiality. You say that you have a daughter, Alice: if it is the lovely girl who sat next you at the play, I may be of service  
to

to her—she has beauty sufficient to ensure her good fortune. I will call on you to-morrow, as I have many things to consult you upon, and if any circumstance should in the interval occur to your mind, by which I can serve you or your family, do not hesitate to mention it, Alice, for I am just as warmly your friend as ever.”

Mrs. Mackenzie felt anew the magical influence of her smile, and of her flattering condescension; it seemed to take from her all power of self-will, and to render her as much the slave of the marchioness as she was of Miss Fitz-Arthur; and she withdrew from her presence full of gratitude for her kindness, yet fearful lest she should not have sufficient firmness to resist the force of her eloquence and the subtilty of her inquiries the next day.

Edward was prevented from seeing his mother, as he had intended, on her return from the marchioness of Anendale's. He had called at lady James Osborne's, and had been induced to remain there from  
the

the most powerful motives of curiosity. On entering the drawing-room he perceived her ladyship and Mr. Colvill in earnest discourse with a little thin old man, whose benevolent countenance immediately prepossessed Edward in his favour. His dress was plain, even to shabbiness, and the warm heart of Edward felt a generous desire to assist with his mite in relieving what he conceived to be the necessities of the little thin old man. What was his surprise, therefore, when lady James, starting from her seat, caught his hand, and exultingly introduced him to her father, the dean of H——.

“Mackenzie! Edward Mackenzie!” exclaimed the little thin old man. “Surely this young friend and favourite of yours, Maria, is not the son of the brave lieutenant Mackenzie, who fell in America? If so, he is the boy for whom I felt so warm an interest, and for whom I stood godfather, when I christened him nineteen years ago.”

off

“I believe

"I believe that I am the same being," modestly replied Edward, while his fine features glowed with a deeper crimson.

The old gentleman flung his arms round the neck of his godson, and embraced him affectionately; then, surveying him with strict attention, he said, while tears of pleasure gushed into his eyes—"How I rejoice once more to see you, my dear boy!—and to see you thus—to behold you in appearance all that I had wished to make you—to hear that you are doing well in life, and that you are worthy of the esteem and affection which your friends feel for you! Never, Maria, was I more deeply interested in the fate of any human being than in that of my little godson, and you have heard me a thousand times lament the circumstances which prevented me from affording him my protection and assistance."

"Suffer me to thank you, sir, for those generous intentions," said Edward, gratefully. "Heaven has thought fit to deprive

prive me of my gallant father, but Heaven has raised me up a host of friends, to whose kindness I am not ashamed to own myself indebted for all that I possess."

"Oh, father," cried lady James, "do you not think that Mr. Mackenzie is like my brother Richard?"

"He was more like when an infant," replied the dean, "for then he so strongly reminded me of what Richard was when a baby, that to that circumstance, perhaps, may be ascribed the uncommon interest which I felt for his welfare." Then, turning to Edward, he said—"And since we have thus unexpectedly met, my dear boy, our friendship must not end here—give me your address, that I may call on you tomorrow, for I have many inquiries to make respecting yourself and your parents, both of whom pleased me exceedingly."

The old gentleman, with all that loquacity which is natural to age, now began to repeat his first meeting with Alice in the stage-



stage-coach, relating minutely all that had passed at the inn, and her marriage with Mackenzie, down to the time of his being compelled to leave town himself.

During this narration the feelings of his auditors underwent a variety of different changes. Lady James felt delicately alarmed lest Edward should be pained by the garrulity of her father, while he sat listening with that fixed attention which made him anxious to catch every word that fell from the dean, and almost unconscious that any other being was present. Mr. Colvill appeared equally attentive, but at times restless, impatient, and agitated almost to fainting ; he seemed as if he wished to speak, but was afraid of trusting his own voice, lest it should betray what was the internal struggle within him.

The old gentleman, without noticing the effect which his discourse had upon his hearers, proceeded to state with great exactness all that he knew concerning Edward

ward and his parents, commenting again upon his own vexation at not being able to do for him what he had wished and intended—"But," said he, "it may still be in my power to serve you, and if I can I will; therefore expect me to-morrow, that we may talk over old matters, and adjust new ones."

The morrow came, and with it the venerable dean of H——, who instantly, and without any ceremony, inquired of Edward if he was aware that lieutenant Mackenzie was only his adopted father? Edward replied in the affirmative, assuring him, however, that no real parent could have loved him more tenderly, or done more to forward his welfare than the brave Mackenzie. Encouraged by the tender concern manifested by the dean, Edward ventured to confide to him the long-cherished wish of his soul, which was, that he might arrive at the knowledge of who was his real father.

"It is a very natural wish, my dear Edward,"

ward," said the venerable dean ; " and it is both improper and unjust in your mother to withhold from you so important a piece of knowledge. Supposing that in the days of her girlhood she had been deluded by false promises, and robbed of her innocence by the artifices of a superior, no blame, no shame could attach itself to *you*, my child ; no liberal mind would think the worse of *you*—no generous soul would cast a reproach on *you* for the fault of your parents. You are now arrived at an age when it is necessary that you should be acquainted with who was your father. Perhaps I may assist you in the discovery, if you can feel for me a similar affection to that which I entertain for you ; and in that case, my dear boy, lay open your whole heart to my inspection—confide to me all that may seem likely to favour our search ; and trust me, Edward, that not even my own children shall know more of what passes between us than you authorize me to disclose."

Edward,

Edward, grateful by nature, now warmly thanked his godfather for his proffered kindness; and, feeling that he was worthy to be trusted, he confided to him all the events of his life, beginning with his being placed under the care of his grandmother, the worthy Margaret Grey, on whose fond affection he dwelt with tender delight, while a tear fell to the remembrance of one who had doted on him with blind partiality.

Edward was a faithful narrator of what had passed. He had much to say, and many a warm tribute of gratitude to pay to the friends who had protected and assisted him at her death, and whose steady kindness had enabled him to make choice of a profession which would afford him ample means of support. He spoke with enthusiasm of his adopted father, not concealing from the attentive dean the frequent conversations which he had had with his mother upon the subject of his birth. He however forbore to name the marchioness of Anendale, though he could  
not

not help owning that, until very lately, he was ignorant that the dean had honoured him by making him his godson.

“ It is very singular,” remarked the dean, “ that your mother should have kept you from the knowledge of every thing which seems most important for you to be acquainted with. When I first saw her, I was particularly struck by her appearance and situation. I at first believed her to be a widow, but upon a nearer intimacy this belief vanished, and I thought, from several trivial occurrences, that you were the pledge of stolen interviews—the offspring of a father superior in rank to the mother, who seemed anxious to conceal her own origin and station in life, yet desirous to perform to the utmost her maternal duties. There was a bashful reserve about the manners of Mrs. Mackenzie in speaking of herself, or of those with whom she was connected, that convinced me she had a secret to conceal, and this secret I suspected to be attached to

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your birth. The mysterious mark on your arm, and her painful confusion on its being seen, increased my suspicions. A thought once crossed my mind, but it was too improbable to remain, yet I felt as warmly interested in your happiness as if I had been convinced that thought was true. I will see your mother, Edward, and will try to convince her that she is doing you an act of gross injustice in withholding from you the name and connexions of your father."

Edward again expressed his deep sense of the kindness thus manifested towards him by the dean, but assured him that so firm was the determination of his mother to conceal from him who was the author of his being, or even who was his godfather, that he did not conceive that his friendly attempts would meet with any success; on the contrary, his mother might feel offended at his exposing her to the persuasions and remonstrances of a person to whom she felt herself greatly obliged,

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and for whom she entertained a high respect.

“ In that case,” replied the dean, “ I will trust to chance, which may throw me in your mother’s company. I have always called, whenever I came to town, at her old lodgings, and it will therefore not appear strange if I should now inquire of Mrs. Alexander Mackenzie concerning her.”

The good-natured dean had found himself so completely at home with his godson, that he remained and partook of bachelor’s fare, and did not leave him until late in the evening, when Edward, full of anxiety to learn the result of his mother’s visit to the marchioness, hurried to her abode with all the speed that love and curiosity could give him.

CHAPTER VIII.  
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EDWARD testified the greatest astonishment on being informed that the marchioness had that morning paid a visit to his mother.—“What do you think of her, dear Janet?” said he, turning hastily to Miss Cameron.

“She is very, very beautiful,” replied Janet; “but I dislike the expression of her eyes, although I seemed fascinated whenever she looked at me. Ah! I see that you don’t think as I do, and indeed it is ungrateful in me to find fault with one who has behaved so kindly, and who wishes to do me every service in her power.”

“The marchioness has desired me to let her have Janet as a companion,” said Mrs. Mackenzie, “but I would not give my full consent until I had seen you. I am  
afraid



afraid that you would then have an additional inducement to frequent her house, and I already begin to tremble anew for the consequences of your intimacy."

Edward replied that he was surprised his mother should think of parting with Miss Cameron, whose society must constitute her chief happiness, and that, highly as he prized a wish of lady Anendale's, he trusted that his mother would frame any excuse rather than allow Janet to reside in a house where he could have no possible means of access to her, without betraying at once his relationship.

Mrs. Mackenzie smiled faintly on her son.—"I did not mean to part with Janet," said she, "but I wanted to see whether you would yield her to the wishes of your beloved marchioness. She believes that Janet is my daughter, and therefore is generously anxious to promote her future establishment in life. She finds her sufficiently accomplished to make an agreeable companion, even to a woman of her

rank, and therefore proposed taking her under her protection."

Miss Cameron appeared confused during this speech of Mrs. Mackenzie, though she endeavoured, but in vain, to hide it from Edward, who now inquired of his mother the result of her interview with lady Anendale, and the cause of her visiting her so speedily ; to which inquiry his mother replied by recounting as much as she judged proper of the conversation which had passed between them.

"I find," said she, "that you have created an uncommon interest in the bosom of the marchioness, and that her curiosity is upon the rack to find out who were your parents. I know that she will not rest until it is gratified, and it is this that alarms me."

"Why not tell her at once that I am your son?" exclaimed Edward, kissing his mother's cheek. "End her suspense, and give me a double claim to her favour. You know how I dislike concealments, and hate all appearance of mystery; nay, if it  
were

were not that you were my own dear mother, I should say that I could not think well of any one who thought it necessary to use disguise, since openness and candour is the ready way to my heart. But you look pale, my fair cousin; I fear that you are unwell."

Miss Cameron made a slight excuse for her indisposition, and Edward again turned to his mother.—“What say you, my dear mother? will it not be better to tell the marchioness what she may probably find out without our assistance? and then what a despicable figure I shall make for having lent myself to forward so unnecessary a deception!”

“Edward,” said Mrs. Mackenzie, “I am the best judge of the motives for my own actions. I have already told you that the discovery of your birth would ruin you in the estimation of lady Anendale, and draw upon you her hatred and resentment.”

“That must be on account of *my father*,” cried Edward unguardedly, “for she is too much attached to you, mother, to dislike me for being *your* son.”

“Perhaps you are right, Edward,” said Mrs. Mackenzie; “but let us drop the subject. My spirits have been sufficiently tasked this morning, and cannot endure any fresh exertion; yet once more let me caution you to conceal who you are, if you value my repose and your own peace.”

She now quitted the apartment, leaving Edward alone with Miss Cameron, who, as he flung himself beside her, again became pale and trembling.—“For Heaven’s sake, beloved Janet,” said Edward, grasping her hand in his, “what is the cause of this strange, this unaccountable emotion, whenever I address you, or offer to take your hand in mine? Am I disagreeable to you, my dear cousin, or have I unintentionally offended you?”

“Oh no! no!” cried Janet, in agitation,  
and

and trying to withdraw her hand. "You can never offend, never be disagreeable to me, Edward."

"Then why this mysterious emotion, this reluctance to allow me even a brother's privilege?"

Miss Cameron burst into tears, and Edward, more and more alarmed, conjured her to tell him the cause of her uneasiness. "Do not let me have to accuse *you*, my dearest Janet," said he, "of conspiring to make me miserable. Do not let me have to reproach *you* with wantonly sporting with my peace, and using concealment where concealment is unnecessary——"

Miss Cameron gave a convulsive shudder, and sunk back on her seat. The cry of terror uttered by Edward soon brought Mrs. Mackenzie to his assistance, who, equally alarmed, applied with trembling hands the usual restoratives, and Janet, recovering, opened her eyes, then closed them again, and leaning upon the bosom of his mother, seemed relapsing into her

former insensibility, while Mrs. Mackenzie clasped her to her bosom in stifled agony, and Edward hung over her with breathless tenderness.

“She is dying, mother,” said he, in a faltering voice, “and you will be her murderer. You possess the power to calm her distressed feelings, yet you refuse to use it.” Then, starting wildly from the position in which he leant—“I will endure this no longer,” said he, angrily. “Life is not worth having, if it must be purchased by the sacrifice of all that is valuable.”

“Stay, Edward, I conjure you,” cried his mother—“stay, and tell me whither you were going?”

“To the marchioness,” replied Edward, his hand on the lock of the door. “She it is who rules my destiny, and with it is connected the peace of Janet. I am no longer to be misled by excuses. I will know at once my fate, and the cause of Janet’s wretchedness.”

“Stay,

“ Stay, oh stay, my son !” exclaimed Mrs. Mackenzie, in an agony of fear ; “ stay, and assist me to convey Janet to her chamber. See, she revives. My child ! my beloved child ! why have you lost all confidence in my affection ?”

Edward returned ; he flung his arms round the waist of Janet, who suffered him to support her.—“ *Five words*, my mother, only *five words*, you said, were necessary to ensure the happiness of my dear Janet. Will you promise me now to repeat them ? Upon no other terms will I consent to forego my intention of disclosing to the marchioness who I am.”

Mrs. Mackenzie looked first at the poor trembling Janet, and then at her son—“ Oh, Edward,” said she, “ you know not what you ask ; but I yield to necessity. Leave us, my dear Edward, and rely upon my affording Janet all the consolation and comfort which you demand. To-morrow you will not find her averse to listen to your avowals of affection.”

Edward, trusting to the promise of his mother, took an affectionate leave of his beloved Janet, with the assurance of seeing her well and happy the next morning, at their usual hour of breakfast. But, although satisfied as to the veracity of his mother, who he believed would no longer trifle with the repose of Miss Cameron, he still felt he was unjustly treated, since he was no longer a boy without prudence or without pride, both of which would enable him to bear with proper fortitude any secret which his parent might have to communicate.

With feelings but ill-suited to the scene, Edward returned home to dress for a ball, to which he had been invited by lady Manningham, preparatory to the nuptials of Flora and Mr. Vivian. He was engaged to dance with lady Jane —, and he therefore felt desirous to be there in time, lest his fair partner should have cause to accuse him of negligence. His spirits were harassed and depressed by  
the



the unaccountable behaviour of Miss Cameron ; and honest Oliver, who saw that his master was vexed by something which had occurred during his absence from home, brought him a bottle of fine old wine, which had been sent him as a present from sir Joseph Rennie, and, with the freedom of pure and genuine affection, he, without asking leave, drew the cork, and placing it before him with some biscuits, besought him to taste, and decide upon its goodness.

Edward felt the kindness of Oliver, such as it was really meant, and, ordering him to bring another glass, obliged him to give his opinion first of its excellence ; then, finding that the wine was such as Oliver had described it, he drank pretty freely, in order to raise his spirits to a proper pitch of exhilaration, that all unpleasant reflections might be banished from his mind.

Notwithstanding this artifice, some painful ideas intruded themselves. He could  
not

not help feeling that, with all the advantages of friends and of flattering prospects, his situation was by no means enviable, since the happiness of his life depended upon the breath of his mother. It was in her power to satisfy one of the principal wishes of his heart—it was in her power to do away the painful mystery of his birth, and to explain to him the singular cause of Miss Cameron's reserve and evident uneasiness whenever he approached her.

“And yet,” said Edward, drawing from his finger the sparkling present of lady Jane, “my disinterested affection might demand a gentler mode of conduct than that of repulsive indifference. The love which warms my breast, and which is proof to the tender blandishments of the noble, the generous lady Jane, surely deserves to meet with a warmer reception than tears and stifled sighs of hidden grief.”

Another and another glass was swallowed, to drown, if possible, the remembrance

brance of what annoyed him. He then dressed himself, and proceeded to the house of lady Manningham, where, as usual, his presence was greeted by every demonstration of genuine kindness. The rooms were crowded, but lady Jane had not yet arrived, and Frederic drew him on one side, that he might impart to him the important intelligence of his having ventured to discover to his mother his correspondence and interview with lady Elinor.

“ My mother heard me without testifying any expression or motion of disapprobation,” said Frederic, “ and this encouraged me candidly to avow my love for Elinor, and my hopes that she would favour my intention of withdrawing the sweet girl from her prison, and from the tyranny of her jailors. My sincerity pleased my mother. She listened patiently to my description of my beloved Elinor’s attractions, and, when I repeated to her our  
stolen

stolen interviews, and her innocent expressions of gratitude for our proffered services, my mother confessed that, much as she disliked the marchioness, yet she could not extend that dislike towards her neglected and amiable daughter. Our conference took place this morning. My father is apprized of my attachment; and, as my mother is on my side, he has not attempted to start any objection to what she has sanctioned. Congratulate me, therefore, my dear Mackenzie, since my parents have consented to my loving the ill-treated Elinor—nay, my mother half-expressed her inclination to afford her all the protection in her power; and, thus encouraged by the respected authors of my existence, I deem myself justified in claiming the hand of Elinor, to whom I have already written, that she may no longer doubt the reception which she will meet with from my family, when she honours it by becoming one of its members. I shall

shall soon follow my letter, and in the course of a few days I anticipate the bliss of calling the lovely Elinor my wife."

This pleasing piece of intelligence had the most enlivening effect on the spirits of Edward, and when lady Manningham took the opportunity to question him respecting the neglected daughter of the marchioness, he described her in terms of such warm, such animated praise, that her ladyship smiled on the young enthusiast, and good-naturedly cautioned him to beware how he rivalled his friend. The appearance of lady Jane — at that moment prevented the reply of Edward, and he quitted the side of lady Manningham to join that of his fair admirer.

Never perhaps had Edward looked handsomer than he did this evening—never had he moved with greater ease, elegance, and grace; and lady Jane, as she gazed on him with affection and admiration, could not help flattering herself with the delightful

lightful hope that he was destined to become the partner of her future life. Lulled by this pleasing delusion, lady Jane looked and spoke with more than her accustomed kindness, while circumstances, and the natural gratitude of his nature, made Edward equally attentive to her ladyship. The rapture of her feelings was quickly damped as her eyes glanced upon his ringless hand, for in the hurry of dressing he had forgot to replace it on his finger.

“ See,” exclaimed lady Jane, holding up to his view her own fair hand, “ see, Mr. Mackenzie, how constant I am in my friendships. I have worn the pledge of your esteem ever since the hour in which I received it; but you——”

Edward coloured as he encountered her reproachful eyes—he stammered out his excuse, which was readily accepted by her ladyship.

“ I was silly enough to feel pained, Mr. Mackenzie,” said she, “ on perceiving that  
you

you had laid aside my ring. I thought—that is, I feared that it might have lost its value in your opinion.”

The reply of Edward was such as might be expected to come from a young and ardent character like his. It brought the life-blood to the cheeks of lady Jane, who replied with gaiety—“How could I tell, Mr. Mackenzie, but that some one existed who might possess a prior claim on your devotion, and for whose tranquillity my ring had been displaced. Ah, traitor, I was right—your blushes betray the justness of my suspicions. Some one does exist, for whose peace, were it necessary, you would not hesitate to sacrifice my gift.” Then, sighing deeply, she added—“If such is the case, Mr. Mackenzie—if your heart has already made its election, you have my sincerest wishes for the success of your passion, and in my prayers I shall not forget to petition for your happiness.”

She rose hastily, but Edward caught her  
her

her hand, and gently detained her.—“ If your penetration has discovered the secret of my soul,” said he, “ let not that circumstance bereave me, dear lady Jane, of what I deem one of my proudest boasts, your friendship. Our affections are not always within the bounds of our own keeping. They are sometimes involuntary gifts, in which reason and prudence are little consulted; but the bright flame which emanates from friendship’s shrine burns with a purer, holier light, unmixed by any of the grosser particles which hover round the lamp of love, dimming its celestial brilliancy. Suffer me, dear lady Jane, to retain the delightful hope of continuing to possess your esteem; it has already softened down the asperity of my private vexations, and added another charm to reconcile me to my fate.”

Lady Jane looked tenderly in the face of Edward, while her eyes were moistened with tears.—“ If I know any thing of myself,” said she, in a low tone, “ you may  
safely



safely rely, Mr. Mackenzie, upon the continuance of my esteem. Had your happiness depended upon——But that is at an end——yet if at any time you should require either the soothings of friendship, or the assistance of interest, remember Jane.”

Edward raised her hand to his lips; at that moment Mr. Colvill passed, and lady Jane retreated to another apartment, to hide her painful emotions.

The brother of lady James Osborne took the vacant seat, and, gently placing his hand on the shoulder of Edward, said, in a conciliating voice——“ You seem discomposed, my dear young friend: what has occurred to damp the joyous festivity of the present lively scene? Has lady Jane offended you? If so, her ladyship appeared truly penitent for her fault, for I saw the tear of contrition glisten on her cheek as she abruptly passed me.”

“ Lady Jane is one of the most disinterested of human beings,” exclaimed Edward, warmly. “ Insensible to her merits,

rits, and blind to her perfections, I have slighted a friendship, which, but for one circumstance, would have been the soul of my existence."

"I am much mistaken," said Mr. Colvill, "if either rank or fortune has any influence over your affections. I always liked lady Jane, but I shall now love her better than ever, because I believe that she has had sense and discernment to prefer untitled merit to the swarm of fashionable blockheads who buz around her, and court her favour, merely because they have nothing else to do. But, my dear boy, I have a question to ask of you, which would have led me to your lodgings, had I not expected to have seen you here this evening. It is this: my father, during his narration of the circumstances which first led to his intimacy with your mother, dropped some expressions which awakened in my mind the foolish belief that she was not unknown to me. I confess that this is extremely improbable, yet I cannot  
get

get rid of the idea—it has haunted me ever since ; I seem to feel that something connected with my happiness is attached to the discovery of your mother's name and family, and, from this circumstance, I am confident that you will not think me obtrusive or impertinent, if I request of you to give me the information which I am so desirous of obtaining."

"I would not hesitate an instant, my dear sir," replied Edward, "if it depended upon me to gratify a wish of yours. But there is a singular mystery which hangs over my birth and connexions—a mystery which I have vainly endeavoured to penetrate, and which is the only alloy to my happiness ; it is the secret poison which, though slow in its effects, nevertheless envenoms the most blissful moments of my life, converting the sweetest emotions of my soul into a source of pain and mortification. I have unwillingly been obliged to promise that I would indulge the strange  
caprice

caprice of my mother, and conceal both her name and place of abode."

"Then I will press you no farther on the subject," said Mr. Colvill, "but trust to chance to gratify my wishes. The uncommon interest which I feel in all that concerns you, my dear Edward, and my unaccountable desire to become acquainted with your mother, almost induces me to suspect that my feelings are guided by some supernatural agency, as the disappointments of my early years have taught me to guard against the fallacy of first impressions, and have also deadened within me those seeds of curiosity which, more or less, are planted in every bosom. But I detain you from the pleasures of the dance, and the bright eyes of my niece, Olivia, tacitly upbraid me for my selfishness."

Edward rose immediately, on perceiving Miss Osborne, and apologized for not having sought her.—"Oh, I can well excuse you," cried Olivia, good-naturedly, "for  
there

there is such a honied charm in the sound of uncle Richard's voice, that I could listen to it myself for ever."

Edward, on re-entering the ball-room, looked anxiously around for lady Jane, and when informed by a lady who stood next him that her ladyship had complained of indisposition, and returned home, he felt a sadness of heart, a lowness of spirits, which took from him all power of entering into the amusements of the evening. As soon, therefore, as he could, he quitted a scene which had now become discordant to him, and, like the generous Jane, returned home to meditate upon the conversation which had passed between them.

CHAPTER IX.  
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THE next morning Edward felt a considerable degree of impatience to behold what effect the *five words*, to which his mother had attached so much consequence, had had on Miss Cameron. All the vexation of the preceding evening was quickly forgotten, when, on hastening towards her, she half met him, with a bashful blushing countenance, which seemed to say that she was no longer averse to the tender expressions of his affection. Encouraged by her looks, Edward ventured to press his lips to hers, then, turning to his mother, and embracing her, he said—"I perceive, my dear mother, the talismanic effect of your *five words*, and am content to remain in ignorance of them as long as I behold the countenance of our dear Janet  
such

such as it now is, dimpled with smiles, and beaming with love and tenderness. Ah, Janet, if you knew what I have suffered from the dread of being regarded as the object of your indifference, you would feel a double interest in assuring me that I have thought falsely, when I feared that you did not love me."

Miss Cameron's beauty was increased in the eyes of Edward by the sweet confusion of her blushing face, as she replied, that he had certainly erred in his judgment of her feelings towards himself; for, though circumstances had hitherto compelled her to adopt a conduct foreign to her heart, yet if he had suffered by that conduct, he had not suffered alone.

"That I can answer for," said Mrs. Mackenzie, "and for more even than Janet's modesty would allow her to declare. This I may venture to say, without wounding her delicacy, that every pang which pierced your heart wounded her own."

Edward cast a glance on Janet of thank-

ful tenderness.—“ I feel relieved,” said he, “ of a heavy load which has so long oppressed me: yet how, dearest Janet, can I be assured that your parents will sanction my passion?”

“ Leave the management of that affair to *me*,” replied Mrs. Mackenzie smiling, “ and rely with confidence upon my word, that no impediment will arise from the *parents* of Janet to blight your hopes. From *your* friends, my dear Edward, you may probably receive many wholesome lessons of advice against your marrying a girl whose connexions are so far inferior to what your prospects, talents, and situation in life authorize them to expect for you; but I, who know the virtues and sweet temper of our Janet, feel convinced that, from those endearing recommendations, as well as from another circumstance which you will shortly be acquainted with, your happiness will be more secure in her hands than in that of any other woman.”

Edward's heart most readily subscribed

to



to this assertion of his mother. He never gazed upon the bright blue eyes of Janet Cameron without their recalling to his mind his dear adopted father—he never heard her speak, or saw her smile, but his imagination almost cheated him into a belief that Mackenzie was before him; and to this resemblance may principally be ascribed the tender preference which he felt for Janet Cameron, and the firm hold which she had gained over his affections, even before he was aware of it himself.

The change which had so instantaneously taken place in the behaviour and appearance of Miss Cameron operated with equal force on the spirits of Edward, and he almost forgot that there still existed an unexplained cause by which his peace and happiness was affected. With all the sanguine ardour of youth, he looked forward to the time when his profession would enable him to claim the hand of his adored Janet, when it would permit him to support her with that elegance

which her person, manners, and acquirements would not disgrace. Who among his friends that would not rather commend than censure his choice?—he was at least certain of Frederic Manningham's approbation, which, strongly as they were attached to each other, was a circumstance of importance in his estimation; and that he might the sooner arrive at the summit of his wishes, he resolved to live with the utmost frugality, and to abstain from every unnecessary expence. At the moment when this prudent resolution was made, Edward received by post several letters, and among them was one from Patty Ashford, giving so pleasing a description of his little godson, that Edward, who sat down immediately to reply to her, forgot his economical intentions, and enclosed a bank-note as a present to his namesake. The agreeable account which she also gave of their improving business, and the tender eulogiums bestowed on her husband, afforded Edward the purest gratification.

tification. It also contained information of a circumstance of great importance to the happiness of Mrs. Ashford, namely, the death of the worthless woman who had so long ruled the mind of her father, a circumstance which had already affected a great change in Mr. Smith; he had given up the house which he had inhabited for many years, and had gone to reside with his daughter, paying her husband for his board, and behaving both to themselves and their child with extreme kindness.

This intelligence delighted Edward, as he was well acquainted with the filial tenderness of Patty, and knew that nothing could more conduce to her tranquillity than to see her father once more become a worthy and respectable member of society. The circle in which Edward moved, the brightness of his prospects, and the multiplicity of his engagements, had not the least abated his affection for the friend and companion of his early years. He

wrote her a long letter, in which he informed her of a variety of occurrences, all calculated to gladden the heart of Patty; but that which would delight her most was the promise of bringing his mother and his intended bride to spend a week or two at the dear-loved village, which had been the scene of many a pleasing pastime, many a delicious endearment; and Edward, who had often talked of Patty, and dwelt with grateful enthusiasm upon her conduct towards his venerable grandmother, felt more real joy at the idea of thus introducing to her knowledge the chosen partner of his soul, than he had even done when anticipating the hour in which he should present his Janet to a few of his favourite friends; and Janet felt an equal desire to embrace the kind-hearted Patty, and to caress the godson of Edward Mackenzie.

Edward, though no longer obliged to check the tenderness of his feelings toward Miss Cameron, though blest in receiving  
the

the delicate testimonials of a mutual affection, did not, as might for a time have been expected, neglect either his professional labours, or the friends who had a prior claim to his attentions. He called upon Mr. Colvill the day before the marchioness of Anendale's masked ball, and, finding that he was absent, but shortly expected home, he went to pay his compliments to lady James Osborne and her amiable daughters, and was surprised to see on the drawing-room table two tickets of admission to Anendale House.

"These," said lady James, taking the tickets in her hand, "have been just sent us by lady Jane ——; she left town this morning, for the seat of her eldest brother, and enclosed them to me, not being perfectly acquainted with my opinion of lady Anendale, which is such as will, I hope, prevent any of my family from attending her parties."

Edward was silent, for it pained him most acutely to hear the name of the mar-

chioness uttered in a tone of censure. He was silent also from respect to lady James Osborne, whom he knew to be too good and excellent a being to falsify even the character of an enemy. But lady James was human, and therefore liable to err in her judgments, in common with the rest of her sex. Edward longed to know what she would do with the tickets, but it was a question which he did not feel authorized to put; he had received one for himself, but he could not help wishing that, if the tickets were of no use to lady James, she would transfer them to him, as in that case he could gratify his Janet with the sight of an amusement perfectly new to her: but in this wish our young lover was doomed to be disappointed, for her ladyship shewed no disposition to make him an offer of the tickets.

A servant now informed Edward that Mr. Colvill was returned, and requested his immediate presence. On Edward's entering his apartment, Mr. Colvill flung himself

himself upon his neck, and embraced him with the warmest affection, yet with an evident agitation that alarmed Edward.—

“ My dear sir,” said he, “ I fear that you are not well?”

“ I have met with something which greatly affected me,” replied Mr. Colvill, “ and I am not yet recovered from its effects; but it will afford me relief if I unbosom myself to you, who, I am persuaded, will feel a lively interest in what I shall relate. In passing this morning through St. James’s Park, I was struck by the air and voice of a lady before me, who was conversing freely with a sweet looking girl, her companion, and who, in reply, mentioned your name in a way which convinced me that she was either related to you, or would be so shortly.”

Edward’s blushes, for he had not yet learnt the art of driving back the vital stream before it reached his cheeks, betrayed the truth of Mr. Colvill’s suspicion.

“ I followed them,” continued the brother of lady James, “ with a double curiosity, heightened by my own private feelings, and the belief that I had discovered the person whom I had long wished to see. They entered a large fruiterer’s in Westminster, and I then heard the name of the elder lady, as a footman in the Anendale livery presented her with a letter. She threw up her veil—it was the person whom I had been so solicitous to find out, ever since my return to England : but it was not Mrs. Mackenzie.

“ As soon as I could acquire sufficient self-command I entered the shop, and having purchased some of the choicest fruits, and given my sister’s address, I inquired of a youth who served me what family Mrs. Cameron had, and was told a son and a daughter. I next requested him to conduct me to her apartments, which he seemed to do with reluctance ; I was, however, shewn into a neat drawing-room, where



where sat the object of my search, and her lovely modest companion.

“ I had expected that, after the lapse of so many years, my unexpected presence would occasion Mrs. Cameron some surprise; but I was wholly unable to account for the confusion and excessive agitation which she now betrayed. I took her hand, and endeavoured to calm her emotions, by assuring her that I did not attribute to her the slightest blame in an affair which had terminated so fatally to my peace.

“ Mrs. Cameron motioned to the sweet wondering maid to retire, and she immediately withdrew; but all my endeavours to tranquillize the mind of Mrs. Cameron proved fruitless; she burst into a violent flood of tears, which appeared in some degree to relieve her. This extreme shew of distress in one whom I had always noticed with kindness, and to whom I had ever acted with confiding generosity during our short acquaintance, naturally gave  
rise

rise to well-grounded suspicions; but I checked these unfavourable ideas, and spoke to her of herself and family concerns, with a view to assure her of my friendly intentions. I found her singularly reserved, though she confessed that she had a daughter; but, when I mentioned her son, her agitation returned, and she denied the circumstance so positively, that I felt obliged to acknowledge that I had been better informed on that point, and that I could not guess the motive which led her to deny so dear a claim to her affection. She again repeated her denial, and I began to imagine that the youth had been misinformed; and I therefore apologized for having so boldly asserted a falsehood. I then mentioned the conversation which I had partly overheard in the park, and inquired if she had known for any considerable time a young gentleman of the name of Mackenzie, to whom I was particularly attached? To this question Mrs. Cameron replied, that she had known you  
from

from infancy, and that you were the betrothed husband of her only daughter, the lovely girl whom I had just seen."

Edward, who from the beginning of Mr. Colvill's narration felt conscious that it was no other than his mother and Janet that he had met in the park, expressed by the changes of his countenance the interest which he took in the recital. But he now found a difficulty in concealing his emotions of surprise and anger, at the complicated falsehoods uttered by his mother without any obvious reason. His feelings became so acute that he feared lest they would excite the notice of Mr. Colvill, who now resumed his discourse.

"When I saw Mrs. Cameron a little composed, I ventured to touch upon the subject of our first acquaintance : I reminded her of the zeal she had shewn for my happiness, of the trouble she had taken to gratify my impatient wishes, and of my obligation to her on that account ; I besought her to relate to me some circumstances

stances of which I was ignorant, and to confide to me all that she knew concerning the singular termination of an attachment in which she had borne no inconsiderable share of difficulty and danger. My description of the sufferings I had undergone in the disappointment of my fondest hopes, and the evident tenderness which I still weakly felt towards a faithless object, softened the heart of Mrs. Cameron. She told me all that she felt authorized to disclose, and even hinted that she would say more, but that she was restrained by a vow which she had made. She however dropped enough to awaken in my breast the most dreadful suspicions, which were strengthened by her referring me to *another*, for the truth of what I feared. The result of this interview, she said, would perhaps exonerate her from her vow.—Edward, my dear boy, you cannot imagine how this occurrence has unhinged me. I feel so terribly nervous, that I tremble to be alone; and to appear  
before

before my beloved sister while I am thus agitated would alarm her tenderness. Stay with me, therefore, my young friend, if you are not engaged, for I shall recover myself sooner in your presence than in that of any other person."

Edward most cheerfully consented to the request of Mr. Colvill, although he had several calls which he intended making, and was particularly desirous of seeing Frederic Manningham that evening; but every desire gave place to that of being serviceable to Mr. Colvill, and he therefore remained, to the great gratification of his highly nervous friend, whom with pleasure he perceived to grow by degrees more tranquil and easy, as he endeavoured to divert his ideas into a different channel. In the course of the evening they were joined by the dean of H——, whose presence and unassuming piety of manners had its due influence on Mr. Colvill.

It was late before Edward returned to  
his

his lodgings, when Oliver gave him a letter from Frederic, which he hastily broke open ; for, in the disordered state in which his mind then was, it was some relief to hear from the loved friend whom he could not see, and to trace the well-known characters of a warm and feeling heart, which had ever been most firmly attached to his interests. Edward was, however, surprised at the sudden information it contained, as he had hoped to have seen young Manningham at the marchioness's ball, and had felt impatient to learn his opinion of that beautiful woman. But Frederic was otherwise engaged: he had received a letter from his Elinor, which had determined him to set off immediately for her prison-house, and from thence to Scotland, not doubting but that he should be able to persuade his beloved that his society was far preferable to that of her rigid duenna, and the cheerful and happy mansion of his mother more suited to her taste than the gloomy castle of  
Fitz-

Fitz-Arthur. He took with him a letter from Flora, full of affectionate hopes and prayers for the happiness of Elinor, whom she already styled her sister; and on this, as much as on his own eloquence, Frederic depended for the success of his enterprise. Mabel and her lover were warm in his cause, and were intended to be the companions of lady Elinor's flight.—“Forgive me, dearest Mackenzie,” said Frederic, “for breaking my engagement of to-morrow night. I know how anxious you are that I should behold the lovely marchioness; but her more lovely daughter has a stronger claim on my time, a claim to which even you, friend of my soul, must yield. When Elinor is my wife, I shall return with all possible haste to London, and will then give you my opinion of her beautiful mother.”

But Frederic was fated never to behold the marchioness, nor the sweet Elinor to receive the embrace and blessing of the  
parent

parent who had so cruelly estranged herself from her filial duty and affection.

Edward was vexed at this disappointment of his wishes, yet he quickly became reconciled, when he thought of the superior happiness his friend would enjoy by the side of lady Elinor, unalloyed by any of the mortifying and painful reflections which would necessarily obtrude themselves on *his* gayest hours. Yet Edward seemed to feel, though he knew not why, as if the termination of his perplexities and the gratification of his curiosity were both at hand; and with this belief he strove to lull the turbulent and angry emotions of his soul, endeavouring to forget what he deemed the disgraceful falsehoods of his mother, by fixing his thoughts on the innocent and affectionate Janet, whom he now regarded as his betrothed wife.



CHAPTER X.  
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EDWARD, in obedience to the wish of the marchioness, had ordered his dress to be sent to her house, as he was engaged to dine there with a small party of her select friends. But, as he was the acknowledged favourite, he had the privilege of being admitted to pass judgment upon the various ornaments and decorations which were putting up in the grand suite of apartments, designed for the purpose of the evening's amusement. Edward, therefore, was requested to breakfast with the marchioness at twelve, that he might assist her in her intended inspection. He had, however, sufficient time to call upon his mother, who, unwilling to expose herself to his reproaches, in case he had seen Mr. Colvill, determined to be denied to him, which

which poor Janet performed with so trembling a voice and confused an air, that her lover suspected immediately the cause of her embarrassment. This proof of a pure ingenuous mind was not lost upon Edward, and he loved her the more for her inability to utter a falsehood without blushing.

The marchioness received Edward in her boudoir, and, holding out her hand, invited him to a seat on her couch. She was dressed in a plain morning robe, and looked and smiled divinely. During their repast she entertained him by the display of her knowledge in elegant literature. She spoke of poetry and painting, and lastly of music, of which she was a perfect and delicate judge. She then directed his attention to some exquisite pictures which hung round her little apartment; they were executed by the best masters, and called forth the high praise of Edward: yet even his favourite pursuit lost its principal charm in the presence of the lovely

lovely marchioness. From the subject of painting she artfully recurred to that of his own affairs, and at length inquired if he had any relations living?

Edward replied that he had a widowed mother and a sister, but that he was ignorant of any other claim to his affection, except that of friendship and gratitude.

"I think that I have heard," said lady Anendale, "that your father was an officer, and that he died in America?"

"That was the husband of my mother," replied Edward, "for my father died before I was born, at least so I imagine; but no parent could ever be more sacredly dear to me than my adopted father, the brave, the noble, the gallant Mackenzie. It is his name that I bear, and it shall ever be my study never to commit a single action that can stain its lustre, or that would have met with his censure had he been living."

The marchioness looked thoughtful; then, as if by chance, she laid her beautiful

ful white hand on Edward's arm.—“ With what enthusiasm you speak of your adopted father !” said she, looking full in his face ; “ with what ardour you appear to adore his memory ! I could almost envy him, though dead, the possession of a love like yours.”

Edward pressed the hand of lady Anendale to his lips.—“ Never,” said he, “ can I do justice to the parental care and affection of my adopted father, or to my own feelings towards that dear and revered being ; yet there exists another, who bids fair to share with him all my tenderness and devotion.”

“ Then,” said the marchioness, with a look of irresistible sweetness, “ you love, Mackenzie—you have already felt the influence of that power, which more or less affects the peace of every human being.”

“ Your ladyship may probably have judged rightly,” replied Edward, “ with respect to the state of my heart, but the love to which I allude is of a different nature

ture to that which you mean ; it is such that I will not attempt to describe, though I feel at this moment its full force, and, were it necessary, could sacrifice my own repose to ensure that of its object."

" You are a strange creature, Mackenzie," exclaimed the marchioness. " Now would I give the best trinket in my jewel-box to know who this fair lady is for whom you entertain so singular a *pénchant*."

" And yet were I to tell your ladyship who that person is, for whom I feel the strongest emotions of what may be called a filial tenderness and veneration, you would perhaps reprove me for my boldness, or, at best, laugh at me for my presumption."

" No, on my honour. Although I am still young enough to enjoy the flattery of a lover, yet I think that I should not feel very, very much offended, if the object of your *filial* tenderness were even myself."

Edward was no longer his own master : he fell on one knee before the beautiful marchioness, and, taking her hand, pressed

it fervently to his lips, while tears filled his eyes.—“ Will you then accept of me for a son ?” said he, in a tremulous voice ; “ will you allow me to love you, to adore you, as if you were in reality the blessed mother who bore me ? for never was there a heart more inclined to fulfil all the endearing duties of a child than mine.”

Lady Anendale gazed with fixed attention on the graceful youth, whose fine, manly, open countenance was a faithful index of his mind. The more she gazed upon the kneeling Edward, the more various were the changes of her own features. At length she said, with a forced smile—“ This is the first time, Mackenzie, that I have been solicited by a young and handsome man like yourself to allow him to consider me as his *mother*. However, the request is so perfectly novel, so incomprehensibly strange, that I will not refuse to grant it, especially as I feel that kind of interest in your fate which forces me to accept what, from any other man, I should  
regard

regard as the grossest insult. Rise, therefore, Mackenzie, and receive a mother's embrace."

Lady Anendale said this with an unsteady voice; but Edward thought only of the bliss which he felt on finding himself closely pressed to the bosom of the marchioness. He heeded not the convulsive heavings of that fair and exquisite bosom, nor the pallid hue which for a moment overspread her cheek—his own emotions were too powerful, too new, and too delicious: yet they were unlike those which agitated him when near the person of his betrothed bride; they resembled, as far as he could judge, the rapturous feelings of a long absent son, when clasped to the heart of an adored mother.

Lady Anendale spoke first.—“Mackenzie,” said she, “we are both of us very silly, I in consenting to your request, and you for making it. However, we will now take a survey of what is already done in the best suite of apartments.”

They now quitted the boudoir, and proceeded to examine those objects of whose external elegance and situation Edward's opinion was required. But the taste of the marchioness was so pure and classical, that no improvement could be made after her orders had been executed. The taste of the marquis, her husband, though equally good, had not been consulted, he never interfering in any of the pursuits or plans of his wife, nor ever intruding on her time, unless when she found it convenient or necessary to request his presence. In the present instance, she had drawn largely upon his purse, as this was her first public night since her return to England, and no expence was spared to make it the most brilliant entertainment of its kind.

It was in vain that the marchioness applied to Edward to alter any thing that might offend his eye ; his charmed senses regarded every thing around him as a scene of enchantment. The exquisite beauty of the painted velvets which composed



posed the draperies, couches, &c. the glitter of the golden ornaments, and the rich perfume of the innumerable flowers which filled the chambers, all conspired to give it the appearance of some fairy palace; and it was not without a considerable degree of pride and pleasure that the marchioness heard the warm praises of Edward bestowed on the works of her own fancy.

That lady Anendale should thus feel gratified by the encomiums of Edward Mackenzie, as well as pleased with the novelty of his attachment to herself, may appear singular, and rather improbable, considering that she was a woman still in the prime of her beauty, and whose ear was accustomed to the sound of adulation almost from her birth. But a still stronger reason existed even than those to make the circumstance of her partiality appear strange: this was his resemblance to a person whom she had injured, and to whom she had taken, at an early period of her

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life,

life, a rooted, though ill-founded aversion. This resemblance had struck her most forcibly at her first interview with Edward, but it had worn off, or become familiar to her; and, though her first feelings towards him had not been favourable, yet every succeeding interview had weakened the effect of the introductory one, and strengthened the power which, almost unknown to herself, Edward had gained over her mind.

Lady Anendale had sometimes been surprised at the nature of her regard for Edward, which had overcome the small share of prudence she possessed, and had induced her to acknowledge him openly as her favourite. It is true, that he was far superior in personal attractions, and likewise in talents, to the crowd of her fashionable admirers: but it was not to the beauty of his features, or the manly proportions of his pliant form, that Edward owed the favour of the marchioness. He was too young to be admitted as her lover; yet

yet in what other light could she consider *him*, who in her presence seemed only to live upon her smiles?

The marchioness neither possessed principle nor common prudence. She had openly manifested her preference for Edward; yet, while her heart throbbed with the wildest feelings of unchaste passion, a sudden faintness would dim the lustre of her eyes, the bright bloom of her cheek grow pale, and an universal trembling seize her frame. What could occasion these qualms of conscience in the bosom of lady Anendale? Not the pure and holy light of Heaven, which breaks in upon the dark midnight of a repentant sinner's soul, giving fair promise of future days of virtue: not this—for every failing which had shewn itself in the early years of the marchioness was as deep-rooted as ever—pride, vanity, and envy, which had blasted her maternal feelings, and led her to stifle the sweetest emotions of nature, by turns influenced her

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actions;

actions; but no tear of regret for past errors had ever quenched the brilliancy of her eye, no sigh had ever escaped her lips, no compunction touched her heart, at the occasional remembrance of those whom she injured, of those whom she had wantonly made wretched.

The singular request of Edward, that he might be regarded by her as a son, instead of what was most natural, a lover, produced for the time an effect quite different from that which might have been expected in a woman of her exquisite loveliness. She felt not anger at a desire which would have better become a stoic than the young and ardent Edward Mackenzie; but she felt a sudden rush of new and painful feelings fill her soul—a crowd of confused ideas, of half-formed terrors, crossed her mind, and she pressed the object of them to her bosom, with a tenderness so free from any gross or unholy thought, that she laughed at the momentary purity of her conduct, when the mysterious

sterious fear which had occasioned it had vanished from her mind. She laughed, but it was more forced than natural, for when she retired to her dressing-room, the same indescribable terrors took possession of her faculties, and she would have fainted, but for the timely assistance of one whom she had sent for purposely to attend on her for that evening, as well as that she might enjoy the gratification of viewing the characters.

This person was no other than Mrs. Mackenzie, who, unwilling to offend the marchioness, by rejecting entirely her proffered kindness, had come in obedience to her wishes, though she could not persuade Janet to accompany her.

“No,” said Miss Cameron, “I will not gratify my own desires at the risk of meeting with Edward in a place where he would be obliged to pass by me without speaking. When I am his wife, and sanctioned by his presence, it will then be time enough

for me to behold the pleasures of a masquerade."

Mrs. Mackenzie had not determined upon going when Edward last called at her lodgings; he was therefore wholly ignorant of her being under the same roof with himself until he retired from the dining-table to the chamber where he prepared to dress for the evening. Honest Oliver was in waiting, and presented him with a note from his mother, which gave him the unexpected information of her being so near him, as well as the reasons of Janet for denying herself a sight which would have afforded her, under any other circumstances, so much gratification. This delicate proof of self-denial was not lost upon her lover; he felt its value, and was determined that it should not pass unrewarded.

Edward, assisted by his faithful Oliver, now assumed the garb of a conjuror, which character he was enabled to support with  
proper

proper spirit and *skill*, as the marchioness had initiated him into all the secrets belonging to her fashionable friends with which she was acquainted. She had chosen to personate Iris, and when Edward entered the grand saloon, now illuminated by a variety of classic lamps, beautifully painted, either with landscapes or flowers, he felt as if spell-bound the moment that his eyes fell on the figure of the marchioness. She was arrayed in a thin robe of the most brilliant and varied colours. Her neck and arms were bare, and entwined with Indian chains of the purest gold, clasped with many-coloured jewels, while from each lovely shoulder appeared to rise a wing, formed of the finest peacock's feathers. Her head was encircled by a beautiful ornament, which had the appearance of rays of gold, round the base of which was a wreath of the same magnificent feathers, so arranged as to shew only that part called the peacock's eye. The marchioness, of course, was unmasked, and

never had she looked more youthful, more bloomingly beautiful, than she now did in the character of Iris.

The rooms were soon filled with a concourse of motley and fantastic beings; some were in rags and tatters, others in the most splendid apparel, while some were content to shew themselves in the humble garbs of a beggar-woman, flower-girl, milkmaid, pedlar, &c. The company was numerous, and chiefly of the higher order of nobility, who all pressed forward to pay their court to the lovely attendant of Juno. Among them was a wandering minstrel, who seemed to regard the marchioness with trembling earnestness, and who in his turn called forth the attention of the crowd, by the dignity of his figure, the grace of his movements, and, above all, the extreme agitation which he seemed vainly labouring to conceal, and which excited the sympathy and curiosity of the spectators, who now earnestly requested him to gratify them with some of his minstrelsy.



minstrelsy. Lady Anendale, who had remarked the conduct of the bard, seconded the wishes of her guests. The minstrel bowed respectfully to the marchioness, then beckoned to a little page who attended him, and who carried his harp. Lightly passing his hands over the chords, he sung the following lines:—

- “ Say shall the minstrel’s artless theme
- “ Of rural cot and streamlet dream?
- “ The festive board or rosy bowl,
- “ Or glory fire the ardent soul?
- “ Or these, though each may pleasing prove,
- “ Lady, let me sing of love!”

The minstrel paused for a moment, and then suddenly struck his harp, in a wild and hurried manner, as a prelude to these stanzas:

- “ Yes! ’tis thyself, all gay and warm,
- “ As when my beating heart first met thee,
- “ And still thine eye retains a charm,
- “ That dares my bosom to forget thee.

“ Yes!

" Yes! it *is* thee, and still the same,

" In all the bloom of youth and beauty—

" Yes! 'tis the smile that lit the flame,

" Which banish'd reason, sense, and duty.

" But *thou* art changed, nor boots it now

" To learn what demon thus could move thee;

" Enough for *me* to know that thou

" Art *false*, and I no more must love thee.

" Thou know'st not what my bosom felt,

" When first I found thou could'st deceive me,

" Or e'en *thy* cruel heart would melt;

" And—no! thou can'st not *now* relieve me."

The magic of the minstrel's voice still trembled on the ears of his attentive listeners, long after his form was lost amid the gazing crowd: but it was the marchioness who seemed to feel, even more than her guests, the influence of his voice, though the effect was different; she thought that its tones had once been familiar to her ear, as well as the air and figure of the minstrel, and she *felt* that the words of the song were addressed to herself—yet by *whom* she

she dreaded to conjecture. The emotion of the minstrel, the tearful tenderness of his eyes, which she had seen through the mask, and his sudden disappearance as soon as the song was concluded, gave rise to the most alarming surmises, and she could with difficulty force the smile of necessary gaiety to her face, while her mind was a prey to the most distracting doubts. She spoke to Edward, and commissioned him to seek out the minstrel, and by the privilege of his *art* try to discover who he was.

Edward, whose curiosity was raised, and who half-suspected, as well as feared, that he already knew the person of the minstrel, quickly discovered him in another apartment. He was leaning on a couch, and seemingly indisposed. Edward placed himself by his side,—“ Pardon me,” said he, “ if I intrude upon your reflections; but are we no more to be indulged with the sweet harmony of your lays?”

“ No,” replied the minstrel, sighing deeply,

“ my soul is not attuned to harmony. The song you heard was the last effort of expiring melody ; I have seen—I have heard—and have no longer the power to charm or to be charmed.”

“ I thought I could not be mistaken,” cried Edward, “ when I imagined that in the minstrel I had discovered one of my best and dearest of friends. Ah, sir, with what exquisite pathos and feeling you sung that air, which enchanted all your hearers, the marchioness in particular, for she requested me to follow, and to find out who you were.”

“ Did she indeed do this ?” exclaimed Mr. Colvill ; “ then she suspects who I am. Well, be it so—when I am more composed, I will do myself the honour of addressing a few inquiries to the marchioness. Tell her, therefore, my dear Edward, that you have seen me, and that I was aware of the *purport* of your inquiries ; *she* will understand me.”

“ Ah, my dear sir, only tell me that you think

as I do," said Edward eagerly—"only tell me that our opinion is the same respecting the marchioness, and that you believe that she is calumniated by those who envy her for her superior loveliness. It is not in the power of nature to form a woman more perfect than lady Anendale, and my heart rejects with indignation all that I have heard against the goodness of hers."

"It is the privilege of youth," replied Mr. Colvill, "to disbelieve the dark part of human nature; nay, it is an incredulity so truly amiable, that I cannot condemn, though I may deplore it. Yet remember, Edward, that as you pass through life you will find that it is but too possible for an angel's form to enshrine a devil's heart."

These well-known words recalled to the mind of Edward his poor old grandmother, and a sigh escaped him to the memory of her worth. Mr. Colvill heard it, and tenderly inquired the cause. Edward, forgetful at that moment of his mother's caution,

caution, replied that he could never hear that singular expression of an "angel's form and a devil's heart," without its reminding him of his grandmother, who, though one of the best and kindest of human beings, had used the same words in speaking of the marchioness.

"Ha!" cried Mr. Colvill, as if a new light had that moment broke upon him, "and was the marchioness known to your grandmother, Edward? Tell me, I conjure you, my dear boy, who she was, for she must have known Miss Fitz-Arthur when very young, and must have been most intimately acquainted with her private character; tell me, therefore, dearest Mackenzie, the name of your grandmother, for I am more deeply interested in the question than you imagine."

Edward saw the error which his want of prudence had occasioned, but it was now too late to remedy the evil. He therefore replied, in a tone of self-humiliation which he could not repress, that his  
grand-

grandmother, the worthy Margaret Grey, was housekeeper to lady Fitz-Arthur.

Mr. Colvill grasped his hand in violent agitation.—“ Margaret Grey,” said he, in a hurried voice, “ was the mother of Alice, of that Mrs. Cameron whom I have so long sought for. Oh, if my new-born hopes are true, if my suspicions are just, Heaven has still in store a blessing for me which will reward me for years of past misery and penance. Do not follow me,” said he, rising with an unsteady motion—“ do not follow me, Edward ; I go to seek the marchioness—she alone can calm the fond fluttering tumults of my care-worn soul.”

Mr. Colvill rushed into the chamber, where, as he expected, he again beheld the marchioness. He stopped, for he felt a difficulty of breathing, and leaned against a window for support. The chief of the masks were dancing, and others were engaged in looking on. He saw the marquis of Anendale, who had been speaking to

to the marchioness, pass on to the further end of the room. Now then was a fair opportunity to address lady Anendale. Mr. Colvill approached her; their eyes met, and the colour receded from her lips and cheeks, as she tremblingly endeavoured to escape his observation by retiring into a private apartment, the door of which she had already opened, when Mr. Colvill hastily followed, and, closing it after him, caught the hand of the flying marchioness.

“Gertrude!” said he, in a tone of stifled tenderness, “I come not to reproach you for your cruel inconstancy—I come not to upbraid you for having blighted my fairest prospects, for having broke my heart; I come only to solicit a few minutes’ conversation, and never again will the wretched Colvill obtrude himself on your sight.”

“Speak quickly then,” replied the marchioness, her whole frame trembling with terror and the stings of newly-awakened conscience; and then she added—“I cannot



not imagine what Mr. Colvill can have to say to the marchioness of Anendale."

"There needed not the mention of *that* name," cried Mr. Colvill, "to rouse my slumbering feelings. Oh, Gertrude! Gertrude! and is your heart indeed so callous grown, that, after what once passed between us, you can express surprise at my wishing to see you. Nineteen years of miserable exile have I passed, nineteen years of uncertainty, yet respect for your fame, which was still dear to me, made me stifle the only hope to which my withered heart had then to cling. You had condemned me to eternal wretchedness—you had for ever blighted my opening happiness; yet, anxious to preserve yours, and to shield your character from censure or reproach, I checked the fond wishes of parental love, and in silence and solitude only dared breathe forth the prayer that, though hated and abandoned by you, at a time when I ought to have been most dear to  
you

you, still my child, if it existed, might share your tenderness and care."

Lady Anendale gave a start of convulsive terror. She would have spoken—she would, if possible, have annihilated her former lover, and with him every trace, every remembrance that he once existed, but fear and conscious guilt chained her tongue. Her eyes no longer sparkled with the brilliancy which fascinated every beholder, her cheek no longer glowed with nature's brightest bloom; pale and motionless, she stood like Niobe, when she beheld the last dear treasure of her soul a breathless corpse.

"Tell me, I conjure you, if my child yet lives?" said Mr. Colvill, falling on one knee before her, and throwing off his mask, that he might breathe more freely; "only tell me where to find it, and, in the face of Heaven, I swear to preserve as sacredly as ever the secret of its birth. Gertrude, you tremble, you hesitate to bestow on me the only consolation in your power.

You

You may be missed ; our being seen together may create suspicion ; answer then quickly the only request with which I will ever trouble you, and my prayers shall daily ascend to Heaven for your happiness."

The marchioness, more dead than alive, and but too conscious of her inability to answer the question of Mr. Colvill, as well as seriously alarmed lest any one should discover their interview, said, in a tremulous voice—" This is neither a time nor place to gratify your wishes. Leave me, I beseech you, and I will write and explain every thing that you require."

Mr. Colvill rose.—" I obey you, Gertrude," he replied ; " but I *must* hear from you to-morrow. Do not deceive me, Gertrude; for nineteen years of sorrow such as I have felt would rouse the tamest spirit. I obey you, but remember that I *must* hear from you to-morrow."—Saying this, he hastily resumed his mask, and quitted the chamber.

CHAP.

CHAPTER X.  
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THE absence of Mr. Colvill seemed to remove a heavy weight from off the bosom of the marchioness. She was no longer pale; her cheeks now glowed with the deep crimson of fever, and her eyes sparkled with fresh lustre; yet her heart was a prey to the most tormenting doubts. She felt as if the secret which had been concealed for years was now on the point of being made known to the whole world. With what justice could she expect that *he* whom she had so wantonly abandoned to the sharpest pangs of disappointed affection, should continue to sacrifice his feelings for the good of one who had so shamefully outraged the common duties of humanity? She had promised to write to him, and to explain all that he had requested of her. Could this promise be performed?

formed? Could she confess to a deed which would for ever stamp her name with cold-blooded cruelty, and make it the scorn and detestation of every tender parent, every generous mind? could she do this, and live?

The marchioness rose from her seat, and rushed wildly to her dressing-room. Mrs. Mackenzie, who was reading, felt shocked as well as alarmed by her appearance.

"Alice," said the marchioness, sinking into her arms exhausted by her emotions, "I have seen Colvill—I have promised to write to him to-morrow. He has demanded of me information respecting his child. What can I say?—how can I reply to his questions?—how pacify his anger?"

"For Heaven's sake, be calm," exclaimed the terrified Alice. "Do not look so wildly, my beloved lady—you alarm me beyond measure. You know that you can rely upon my affection, and that I will do all in my power to serve you."

“But where is my poor abandoned infant?” cried lady Anendale, starting from the arms of Alice—“where is the son of Colvill? From me, barbarian that I am, he expects his child!—from me who, regardless of his heavenly smiles, of his helpless innocence, of the double claim which he had upon my care and my affection, inhumanly drove him from my sight, tore him from my heart, and cast him upon the wide and pitiless world, without a home, without a friend, and without a name.”

“Oh, not without a friend,” exclaimed Mrs. Mackenzie, weeping, “for my heart adopted and received him the instant that his mother’s had resigned him. I bore him safe within my arms from the walls which should have sheltered him; I soothed his infant wailings, administered to his wants; and when the poor baby smiled its artless thanks, and nestled close to my bosom, I felt how impossible it was to fulfil even a request of *yours*. ‘No, poor baby!’ thought I, ‘if thy high-born mother, to
preserve

preserve her fame, has been compelled to abandon thee to the scoffs and jeers of an unfeeling world, so am not I. Poor and humbly born, such as my fortune is, so shall thine be.'—I clasped the lovely boy still closer to my breast, and prayed to God to assist my endeavours for his future support. God heard my prayers. I no sooner arrived in London than I met with a friend in the dean of H——, and a husband and a father to my adopted son in the brave and generous Mackenzie."

"Mackenzie!" repeated lady Anendale, in a voice of surprise and horror: "but go on, Alice, while I have life and power to hear you."

"The dean of H—— performed the ceremony which united me to my beloved husband, and at the same time christened my supposed son by the name of Edward Mackenzie. Ah, little did he think that the boy to whom he then stood godfather was his own grandson."

The marchioness groaned in agony; she

seemed nearly lifeless, yet she motioned for Alice to proceed.

“Mackenzie idolized his adopted son; he was even dearer to him than his own children, and for this reason I parted with the boy to my worthy mother, Margaret Grey, when I accompanied my husband to Scotland. This selfish conduct, for which I have always upbraided myself, was productive of the most pleasing consequences to Edward; it gained him a host of friends—it enabled him to pursue his favourite studies, and has raised him to what he now is. If, therefore, my dearest lady, your poor Alice dared to disobey your orders—if she ventured to retain the child, whom in your alarm and terror you commanded me to place in the hospital for foundlings—oh forgive, I beseech you, her fault; for in every other respect most sacredly has she performed her promise: Edward does not dream of his real parents; so carefully have I guarded my painful secret, that even my adored husband

band died in the belief that he was my son. Say that you forgive me, dearest lady!—say only that you forgive me!”

The marchioness pressed the hand of Alice; then, raising her beautiful eyes towards heaven—“ I would pray for you, Alice,” said she, “ I would call down blessings on your head, but that I fear that the prayers of a wretch like me can never reach the throne of mercy. Forgive you! Oh Alice, kindest, dearest, best of friends, I would thank you, but that——”

Alice flew like lightning to the toilet, and flung over her lady a profusion of lavender-water, which seemed a little to revive her; she opened her eyes, and tenderly pressed the terrified Alice to her bosom—“ Edward Mackenzie then is *my* son,” said the marchioness, with a cold deathlike shudder. “ Poor youth! how little did he think, when he poured forth at my feet all the respectful gratitude and filial tenderness of his heart, that I was indeed his mother—his unnatural and un-

feeling mother !” Then, suddenly starting from her seat, and looking wildly towards the door—“ Fly, Alice ! fly, and inquire if he is yet below ; tell him that I wish to speak to him—that I must see him to-night ; to-morrow will be too late.”

Mrs. Mackenzie dared not disobey, yet she felt a strange reluctance to leaving lady Anendale alone. She had no sooner left the room, than the marchioness seemed to regain fresh strength ; she flew towards a small medicine-chest, which contained a bottle of laudanum, and, pouring some out into a wine glass, she held it for an instant in her trembling hand.—“ I have no alternative,” said she, shudderingly, “ but this—no way of escaping the reproaches of my son. My son ! Ah, my God ! am I then the mother of Edward Mackenzie—of him whom my guilty heart has loved with more than maternal fondness ? Can I live after this ? can I submit to drag on a miserable existence, a prey to the accusing horrors of my own guilty conscience,

conscience, and despised or pitied even by my son?"

The last question was decisive, and the marchioness instantly drank off the deadly potion; a moment more, and the return of Mrs. Mackenzie might have saved her. Edward had left the house with the minstrel, and Alice feared to send to him without the consent of lady Adendale.

"It is all for the best, dear Alice," said the marchioness; "I shall be saved the pang of reading in his ingenuous countenance the silent reproaches of his heart. Give me my writing-desk—I will write a few lines to Colvill."

Mrs. Mackenzie tried to persuade lady Anendale to defer her intended letter until the next day, but the marchioness shook her head; she already began to feel the drowsy effects of the laudanum, and, snatching up a pen, she vainly attempted to form the letters which were to portray the remorse and agony of her feelings.—"Alice," said she, throwing aside the pen, "I am
M 4 ill,

ill, and unable to perform my promise. See Colvill *to-morrow*—tell him Mackenzie is his son—let them not curse my memory—and, for the sake of my daughter, conjure them to preserve my secret as faithfully as you have done.”

Her head sunk upon the shoulder of Mrs. Mackenzie, who, finding all her attempts to rouse her ineffectual, rang violently for assistance. The servants came, the marquis was summoned, and a physician was instantly fetched—but all human aid was fruitless, and that dwelling, which had so lately exhibited a scene of the most joyous festivity, was now converted into a house of tears and lamentations, as soon as it was generally known that its lovely owner was no more.

Poor Mrs. Mackenzie, who had been so blindly partial to the marchioness, and in whose arms she breathed her last sigh, was most deeply affected by the manner of her death. She returned home the next morning, seriously indisposed, yet
not

not unmindful of the task which she had to perform, though nearly incapable of the necessary exertion. She however desired Janet to write to Mr. Colvill and to Edward, to request that both of them would call at her lodgings, which request was immediately complied with. Her agitation, her evident illness, alarmed them. She desired Janet to withdraw, and then, endeavouring to collect all her strength and fortitude for the occasion, she disclosed to the anxious lover of her still idolized benefactress the fate of his child. Affection for the marchioness made the faithful Alice soften down, as much as possible, the barbarity of her conduct in deserting her helpless infant, and delicacy made her also touch lightly upon her own tenderness and humanity, which had induced her to adopt the innocent child as her own.

I will not attempt to describe the mingled emotions of Mr. Colvill and his son, as they listened to the simple and affecting narration of Mrs. Mackenzie. The former

exultingly clasped to his bosom the youth who, above all others, he was most proud to call his son, while the latter, almost fainting from joy, surprise, and unexpected pleasure, could but feebly return the passionate caresses of his father. A sudden rush of joyful feelings filled his soul : he at length had found his father—one whom he need not blush to own, one whom he already loved and revered. But his mother—she for whom every pulse of his heart had throbbed with filial love, with filial affection bordering on adoration, she it was who was his mother, and not, as he had always supposed, Mrs. Mackenzie. He broke from the arms of Mr. Colvill, and would have rushed to Anendale House to lull the fears, and tranquilize the mind of his beloved, his agitated mother, had not Mrs. Mackenzie called him back. She flung her arms around him—she called him her son—she reminded him of all his promised kindness, and besought him not to forget that she had taken him from the hour of his birth, concealed him

him in her chamber, and finally adopted him for her own, after she had conveyed him from the Castle.

“No, mother, no!” said Edward, warmly embracing her, “never while I live shall I forget the claim you have upon my duty and affection. To you, and to my revered father, Mackenzie, I am indebted for every thing: without your protection, what should I now have been?—Yet, for all that, I cannot refrain from loving the mother who bore me—I cannot be happy until I have seen her—until I have assured her that no unkind sentiment, no selfish feeling, will ever enter my heart, which is as tenderly devoted to her peace and welfare as if I had been reared under her maternal care. Let me but once hear her acknowledge me as her son, once receive her blessing and embrace, and I shall then be happy.”

Mrs. Mackenzie, deeply affected by the vain wish of Edward, burst into a violent flood of tears, and at length, with extreme

difficulty, discovered to him and to his father, who was equally anxious to assure her of his forgiveness, that the marchioness was beyond the reach of their generous kindness. The manner of her death she however thought prudent to conceal, until they were better calculated to support the shock it would necessarily occasion them.

Mr. Colvill recovered first from the effects of so unexpected and painful intelligence. The marchioness had long been dead to him, yet he could not help feeling severely the suddenness of her death, although the rapture of possessing such a son as Edward took off the heaviness of the blow. But Edward, to whom the marchioness had appeared an idol worthy of the purest devotion, could scarcely credit the assertion of Alice—that she, whom he had seen the night before blooming in health and luxuriant beauty, was now bereft of sense, of motion, and of life. His grief was excessive; it seemed incapable
of

of abatement, and his father hung over him in terror and dismay, until Mrs. Mackenzie assured him that Edward would grow more composed if left for a short time to her care.

“In that case I will return to my sister,” said Mr. Colvill, “and prepare her to receive Edward as my son and heir. To her I can safely entrust the secret of his birth, without wounding the reputation of his unfortunate and imprudent mother. Most faithfully, dear Alice, have you performed a parent’s duties, and, thank Heaven! I possess the means of rewarding you for your fidelity and affection.”

When Mr. Colvill had left them, Mrs. Mackenzie called Janet to assist in soothing the distressed mind of her lover; and, though extremely unwell herself, she succeeded in lulling the excess of his sorrow, by calling his attention to the circumstances of her own life.—“Remember, dearest Edward,” said she, “the various losses which I have had to sustain. Think
what

what were my sufferings when deprived of my little girl—what my agonies, my inconsolable affliction, when fated to behold the partner of my soul expire in my arms! What is your loss compared to mine, and to that of many others? Think of the goodness, the kindness of Providence, my son, for such I shall still call you, who has thus benevolently restored you to the heart of such a parent as Mr. Colvill! think of your numerous friends, and of your affectionate Janet, who at this moment is suffering with yourself!”

Edward raised his eyes at the sound of that beloved name, and beheld the weeping Janet hanging over him, in silent grief. He caught her to his bosom, and mingled his tears with hers.

“Dear Edward,” said Mrs. Mackenzie, “I think that you will now own the *justness* of my persevering concealments. I had solemnly promised to Miss Fitz-Arthur never to betray her secret, either by any direct or indirect means, and for this reason

son I, so carefully as I thought, guarded you from the knowledge of any of your relations—for this reason I so steadily, and at the hazard of injuring my own character, refused to drop even a hint of the name and connexions of your father; and many a time have I regretted that the old lady who attended on Miss Fitz-Arthur when you were born, put on your arm the mark of a coronet.—‘Alice,’ said she, ‘you will have to convey this poor infant to the Foundling Hospital, where he may live or die without our being able to discover him at any future time. I will put a mark on his arm which shall ensure his discovery, if ever he should be sought after.’ And that mark, my dear Edward, though made in kindness, has occasioned me many a pain and many a blush. But you forgive me, Edward, for not yielding to your wishes?”

Edward pressed her to his heart with grateful tenderness.—“But there is another act of concealment,” said she, “which
you

you may not so readily pardon, as I was not compelled in that case, to use deception; yet I had your happiness at heart. I know the excess of your affection for your adopted father, and how dearly you prized every thing which belonged to him. This, therefore, dear Edward, must plead my excuse, if I ventured to introduce to you the daughter of your adopted father, my own Janet Mackenzie, under the assumed name of Miss Cameron."

"How!" exclaimed Edward, as if recovering from a trance, "and is my own dear-loved Janet the daughter of my ever-revered, my adored father? Yes, he was a father to me, in the strictest sense of the word, and sacredly do I venerate his memory; nor will I ever relinquish his name, which he bestowed on me in the fulness of paternal love, for any other, however noble may be its origin. My Janet," cried he, in a voice of trembling tenderness, "*my own Janet Mackenzie*, thus rendered, if possible, more dear to
me

me than ever, as being the child of serjeant Mackenzie."

"I thought that you would forgive me," cried Mrs. Mackenzie, "for this harmless piece of dissimulation: but it nearly cost my poor girl her life. I had concealed from her my secret motive for her passing for my niece, and she therefore met your kindness with the feelings of what she supposed herself to be—your sister. Her aunt Cameron had generously given her an excellent education, but when I last returned to Scotland I found her usurping the authority of a relation, and on the point of forcing Janet to marry a man whom she disliked. I remonstrated, but in vain, and therefore quickly decided upon removing my child, which I did without any scruples, since her happiness depended upon it. It then came into my mind to introduce Janet to you as my niece, and to give her at least as fair a chance of gaining your affections as any other woman; yet this could only be done
by

by her passing for Miss Cameron. Poor Janet too quickly discovered that her tenderness was more than that of a sister, and this will account for her behaviour towards you. At length I was compelled to sacrifice in her favour a part of my resolutions, and the *five words* which had such a magical effect on her were simply these — ‘He is not your brother :’ but I preserved inviolate the secret of whose son you were.”

“Oh, my more than mother!” exclaimed Edward, “how can I repay you for all your acts of goodness towards myself, who had no claim upon your love? How can I repay you for this *last*, best, dearest gift of your affection—your child? Yes, mother! you judged rightly of my heart; no woman in the world could ever hold so firm an empire over me as the daughter of serjeant Mackenzie. Now then can I perform my promise, given in the plenitude of filial love, which is still undiminished; now then can I take to my heart the Janet

net Mackenzie whom he recommended to my care and affection, and who shall in future be the partner of my life, the companion of my choice, and the best and dearest friend of my bosom. Ah, Janet! how well our mother knew the influence of those dear blue eyes—how well she judged the power of thy soft tender voice, so like to that of my adopted father, that I could almost fancy that I heard him soothing and consoling me as he was used to do, when my young heart was bursting with its childish griefs! Oh, my beloved, my adored Janet! it shall be the study of my life to repay in part the debt I owe your father, by watching over your happiness with ceaseless solicitude, and by making the remainder of our dear mother's life pass cheerful and happy."

The joy which Edward now felt, at the idea of uniting his fate to that of the daughter of serjeant Mackenzie, was perhaps the only thing which could have enabled him to bear up against the shock
which

which he received at the sudden death of the marchioness. Had he but been allowed to see her once more, to hear himself acknowledged by her as her son, his heart would have felt more satisfied. All, however, that he could do he did, in honour to her memory. He went into the deepest mourning, and followed secretly her loved remains to the castle of Fitz-Arthur, where they were deposited with her ancestors. He then returned to the caresses of his Janet; but he deferred his nuptials until the period of his mourning had elapsed, thus sacrificing his own happiness to the memory of one who had not scrupled to trample upon the sweetest ties of nature and affection, that she might obtain the distinction of a British peeress.

Mr. Colvill confided to his sister the secret of Edward's birth, but denied himself the gratification of openly acknowledging him, that the character of his mother might remain uncensured after her death. He however settled upon Edward

ward a liberal allowance, and readily consented to his marrying the daughter of those generous beings who had so nobly and so tenderly protected him in his infancy; nor did he forget to reward the too faithful Alice, by making her handsomely independent, and by carrying his sister lady James to the lodgings of Mrs. Mackenzie, that both her and Janet might receive the testimonials of his dear Maria's friendship.

The fatal cause of lady Anendale's death was kept from the knowledge of her daughter, who, on her arrival at lady Manningham's, was received by the whole family with every mark of affection. A messenger was dispatched to the marquis, with a letter from lady Manningham, which soon brought the father of lady Elinor to her house. All past disagreeables were forgotten; his daughter's clandestine marriage was forgiven, and old friendships were cheerfully renewed. Frederic and his lovely partner were re-married at the same

same time that Flora became the wife of Mr. Vivian, and Edward, who was present at the ceremony, felt one more addition to his stock of happiness, in the warmth with which the daughter of the marchioness received him. His Frederic, his true and steady friend, was now become the husband of lady Elinor, of his sister. What sweet emotions did that one word convey to the soul of Edward, as he gazed on the fair form of his Frederic's own beloved wife! How did he long to acknowledge the sweet girl's relationship! but respect for her delicacy, and for his mother's fame, checked the fond wish, and he contented himself with giving way to those tender demonstrations of his regard which he was privileged to shew towards the wife of his dearest friend.

Charles Manningham was present also at the double nuptials of his brother and sister, but Clara prudently refrained from intruding herself on the notice of his family, conscious that whatever civility they
might

might be induced to shew her would be owing to their regard for her husband, not for herself. Too proud and self-willed to acknowledge that she had deserved their neglect, Mrs. Manningham haughtily kept aloof from all parties where it was likely she should meet with any of her husband's relations. She felt most severely their coldness, but she would not even confess this circumstance to Charles, who, in the moments of his anger, failed not to remind her that she had drawn down upon herself the contempt of his family, and the eternal displeasure of her own father.

Clara could not brook these reproaches from one who had been at least the *cause* of her misconduct. She reproached him in her turn, and thus they mutually made themselves obnoxious to each other. Charles consoled himself in the hired caresses of a mistress, and his wife indemnified herself for the loss of his society by gambling away the fortune which his father had most liberally allowed them. Sometimes, in
the

the moments of short-lived penitence, she would address a letter to her father, beseeching him to receive her once more to his bosom, and to rely upon the sincerity of her repentance, but these letters were never answered, as Mr. Lindsay preserved inviolate the vow which he had made on the death of his wife, and therefore returned all the letters of Clara back to her unopened. She applied to Edward for his interference; she represented to him the unkind treatment she received from Charles, and entreated that he would use his influence to persuade Mr. Lindsay to pardon and receive her once more into his favour. Edward felt pained to the soul to deny the request of Mrs. Manningham, but he was compelled, though reluctantly, to assure her that he knew all application on that subject to Mr. Lindsay would be vain, as he was in the habit of hearing from him constantly, and felt authorized in stating that his determination remained the same as ever.

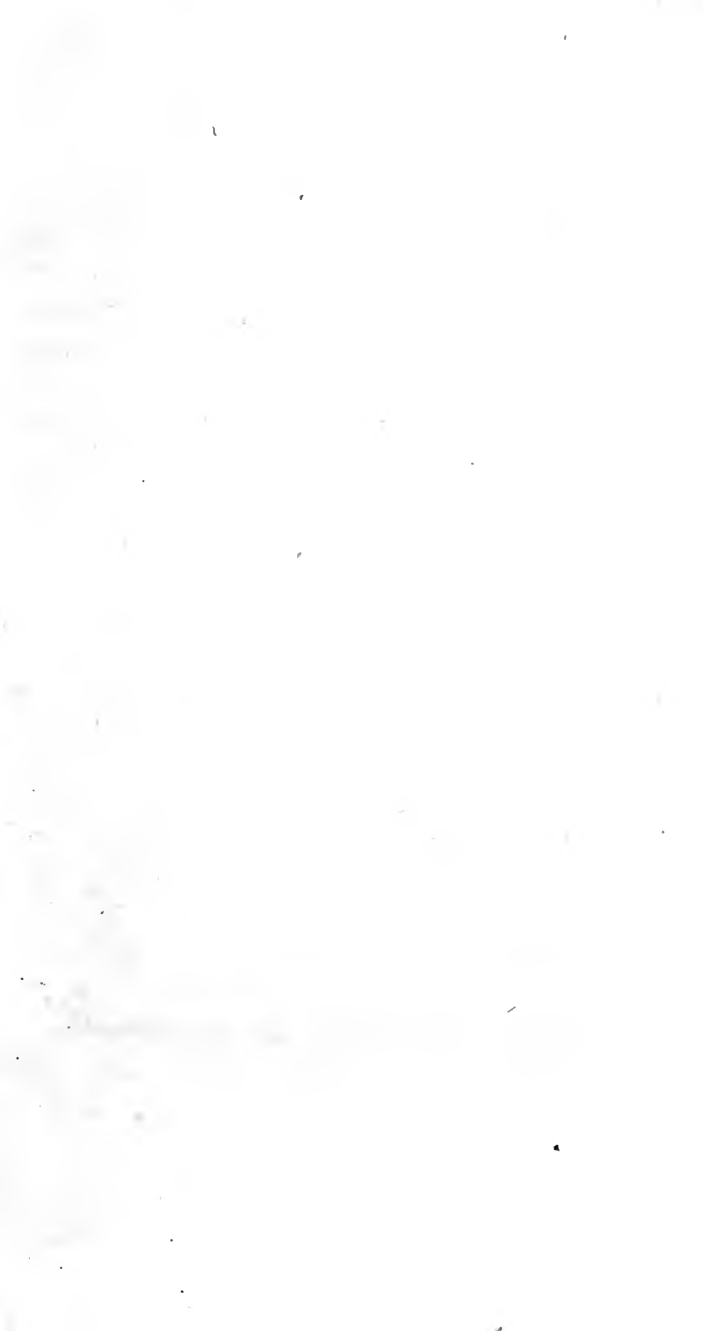
Thus

Thus left to herself, the victim of her own heartless levity and selfish passions, Mrs. Manningham became a prey to every fashionable folly, and the associate of every creature as thoughtless and as dissipated as herself. At length it became necessary for her husband to interpose his authority, in order to wean her from the destructive pleasures of the gaming-table. His own honour was at stake, and he reluctantly, and with a very bad grace, consented to withdraw himself from the gaieties of London, and to go abroad for a few years, confining his expences to a limited sum, which his indulgent father still promised to allow him. Upon these conditions his debts were to be paid, and in case of Mrs. Manningham becoming a mother, and conducting herself with economy and propriety, sir Charles and lady Manningham consented to overlook her past misconduct, and to receive her with all their former kindness.

— This was more than Clara deserved, or
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had a right to expect ; yet the natural ingratitude of her disposition led her to murmur at the generous proposal of sir Charles, and she quitted England without leaving behind her one heart that felt a pain at her absence—a sad, sad instance of selfishness and ingratitude, and a striking example that disobedience in a child towards a parent is sure to meet with its punishment from Heaven.

FINIS.





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